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THE ADVENTURES OF JOUJOU







It seemed to me in the stillness I could hear my heart beating like a clock.

Frontispiece.

THE ADVENTURES OF JOUJOU

BY

EDITH MACVANE

With Fifteen Illustrations in Color by

FRANK VER BECK

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PZ10

THE ADVENTURES OF JOUJOU

I.

UNTIL to-day I used to think that nothing could be so pretty as the convent gardens of St. Veronica, with the dew shining on the flowers. But that, you see, was before I had laid eyes on Saint-Yriac-by-the-Sea!

Above us is the chateau, bare and black on a peak of the tall, white cliffs; below is the village of Saint-Yriac, gray and pinky brown, snug on its little stretch of beach, with the waves breaking on the sand and the black fishing boats pulled up on the shore. It was in one of the poorest of these little tiled cottages that my papa was born, oh, ever so many years ago. But when he was fourteen years old he made up his mind that he

would not be a fisherman of Normandy all his life, like his father and grandfathers for hundreds of years before him. So he tied an extra blouse into a blue handkerchief that his mother gave him, and started and walked to Paris—all the way from Normandy, think of that! He almost starved, lots of times—poor papa! At last an old man who sold balls of shaving soap on the corner of Rue Madame offered him a franc a week to carry his basket.

That is the way papa began. Now he is the proprietor of Perfumery Poizelle, the largest gold sign and the finest crystal windows in all the Rue de la Paix. Yes, he is a millionaire now, nothing less, Papa Poizelle!

So to-day we came down from Paris in our fine new automobile—papa, Aunt Julienne, Johanne and I—to our fine new villa here in Saint-Yriac, which papa has just bought from a marshal of Napoleon

III. Villa Clematis, it is called, because of the vines that trail on the verandas. Inside it is very splendid, with gilt furniture and pink satin cushions—five drawing-rooms, and bedrooms for fourteen guests. "That's something, *hein?*" says papa, very proud. Then he looks up and down the hill.

"See, my sister! See, Joujou! Here is the village below us, here is the castle above. And all between, four kilometres wide, seven kilometres long—all the ancient domain of the Marquis of Saint-Yriac—it's all mine now, by good process of law. All! All!"

"That is true, brother," says auntie, quivering with interest.

"Ah! Ah! My sister, you find that something? Those tyrants, those carrion birds of Saint-Yriac—they have had to give way to the march of progress. It is Poizelle's day now—name of a dog!" Then he looks up at the chateau high up on the hill, and shakes his fist, while his

face grows livid with fury—so strange, not a bit like the elegant gentleman who sells soap to the duchesses, over the splendid shining counters of the Perfumery Poizelle.

Indeed, it is wonderful how they seem to worry him, these Saint-Yriac people, whoever they are. So when Johanne was brushing my hair for dinner, I said to her: "Who is he, Johanne, this Marquis of Saint-Yriac—and is he really as disagreeable as papa says?"

For Johanne was born here in Saint-Yriac, too. She used to be my nurse and now she is my maid. She scolds me sometimes, and I scold her; but no one else shall, because she is the best old thing in the world.

When I mentioned the Saint-Yriacs to her she sprang halfway across the room, while her square, red face turned all wrinkled with rage; so that I jumped, too, quite frightened. "The Saint-Yriacs, mademoiselle? The robbers, the oppres-

sors of the poor! Is not the very sight of that wicked old prison enough for you? Does not your blood rise, does not your stomach boil, when you look at it? Does it not tell you of the wrongs of your race?"

I listened quite carefully, but neither my blood nor my stomach told me a thing, except that I was hungry like a wolf for my dinner. So as soon as Johanne had put me into my blue organdie, downstairs I ran to where papa and auntie were waiting in the drawing-room.

"Here she comes, the little Joujou!" says papa. "See, she is not bad, this little one!" So he stood me up in the middle of the floor and looked me up and down. "Yes, my sister, she does us credit, the little Joujou. Ah! it is a pity that her mother did not live to see her!" he observed, with a sigh. "Her figure is thin, but that is a defect of her youth. And see how tall she is, *mon Dieu*, and she holds her head with an air! It was

not for nothing, after all, that I paid my money to those sacred crows of Veronicans! H'm! hazel eyes, yellow hair, skin white like these cliffs of Normandy, and soft, oh yes, soft like cream! And accomplished, too—did I not pay fifty francs a week for drawing master and singing master? Name of a cannon! There are still some moments before dinner. So sit down, little cabbage. Sit down at the piano and let the old man see what it has bought, his good money!"

So I sat down at the piano and sang to papa and auntie a little song of Victor Hugo that I had learned last week at the convent—a pretty little song; except that my copy always looks to me as though someone had scratched out the last word of the last verse, and written in something else instead. But then, all our books and songs at the convent looked like that, to be sure.

So I sang to papa and auntie the little song about how it is no use for the bird

in the forest to sing, because there is another voice that will always be so much sweeter than hers; how it is a waste of time for the stars to shine in Heaven, for there are two eyes which will always make them dim; and how April needn't bother herself any more to trim the gardens with fresh flowers, because there is a heart where the flower of the world will always bloom.

Now, that is all very well. But listen to the last verse:

"*Cet oiseau de flamme,*
Cet astre du jour,
Cette fleur de l'âme,
S'appelle—le tambour!"

Now, you know—a songbird of fire, a star of day, a blossom of the soul—it's no use telling anybody, even a young girl in the convent, that a drum could be all that!

But, all the same, I think it was rather impolite of papa to jump up and slap his knees and shout and scream as though he

would shake the walls down with his laughter.

"Yes, ah, yes! it is a hot bird, in truth, that drum of yours—drumsticks and all. Ah! Ah! They have earned their money well, that sees itself, these good sisters of St. Veronica!"

"My friend!" said auntie, warningly.

"Yes, yes, my sister! I leave the child's drum as it is—silent, my faith! Someone else shall sound it for her—someone younger and handsomer than old Papa Poizelle. You'll like that, my little nun, *hein?*"

"Brother!" cried auntie again. But papa just chuckled and looked up and down again. "Ah! Ah! He must be a good one, the husband of Mademoiselle Julienne Poizelle, heiress of Perfumery Poizelle, *dot* fifteen millions, inheritance rising fifty!"

"Madame is served!" says Gustave, the new man—who came with the villa—at the door of the drawing-room. So we

all sailed out to the splendid new dining-room, all pink rugs and silver trays and candles in pink shades—all lit, every one, though it was still broad day. *Chic*, are we not? But it is plain that, as papa says, now he is a millionaire at last, he intends to live like one. Yes, we are very *highlife*, here at Villa Clematis!

II.

PAPA was in great spirits all through dinner, planning the company that we are to have this summer.

"Monsieur Rondolé," he said, "head of the great stocking house, wholesale and retail, Avenue of the Opera——"

"The millionaire!" groaned Aunt Julienne, "whose wife is the talk of Paris!"

"*Highlife*, my poor sister! Then, also, Monsieur and Madame Boussard——"

"Chocolate, wholesale and retail—and, oh! millionaires also."

"Birds of a feather, my poor sister. Besides"— papa's face grew so mysterious, you never saw anything like it —"you see, they have a son!" he whis-

pered—as though I could help hearing, too! "Jockey Club and Epatant, this Octave Boussard!"

Auntie looked quite flurried, and glanced at me. "My Camille, we will talk of that later. And now tell us whom else you have asked to eat us out of house and home, at this sacred hotel of yours."

"Only one more, my Julienne. A young American girl, the daughter of my New York correspondent—he who built up the immense sales of Poizelle Shaving Cream in America. This young girl comes to France this summer. It is absolutely necessary that I show her some attention."

Auntie groaned. "An American girl—a bold young savage! Millionaire, also, I suppose?"

"Certainly, my sister. The heiress to millions, of course!"

"Her name, my Camille?"

"Walker—Miss Hazel Walker."

Azelle Valkère! That is a strange, odd name, Walker, and hard to say.

Auntie pursed up her lips. "Very well. For what comes of it, you are responsible, my brother."

"Name of a pig! What was that?"

Papa jumped to his feet, listening. From somewhere behind the trees of the slope below us, there came to our ears the faint high tinkle of a bell.

Gustave coughed discreetly as he passed the braised veal.

"I think, monsieur, it is the cow of monsieur the Marquis, being driven home to the chateau by the old Mother Jobard."

Papa sat perfectly still, but some nasty-looking blue dents came into the corners of his mouth. "The cow of monsieur the Marquis? Then she grazes upon my domain?"

"Yes, monsieur." Gustave looked so pleased, you could know he smelt trouble coming for somebody. "She claims, monsieur, that the domain is still the

property of her master, the Marquis, monsieur."

Papa drew a long breath. "Ah," he said, "this grows amusing. The old days before the Revolution are come back! Poizelle must see his fields trampled by his master's cattle, and ask his master's permission before he buys a piece of land!"

"The tyrants, the murderers!" cried auntie. Then, all of a sudden, the laburnum bushes parted and a spotted cow came slowly out upon the drive-way, followed by an old woman who glared up at us with a perfect unconcern. She was very tall, like a man; her head was tied up in a blue woollen handkerchief, and she carried a long willow switch in her hand.

"Name of a name!" shouted papa, as he jumped through the window. The old woman turned and faced him, as cool as Sister Angélique when I used to find her reading the letters in my trunk.

"*Hein*, my Camille!" said the old woman, just like that. "The same saucy boy as ever, I see."

Now, you could hardly blame papa for being vexed at that. So they had a regular fight out there, quite splendid, just like the fish market. Finally the old woman burst out laughing, then she looked papa up and down with oh! such strange eyes, that shone green in the twilight. Then she turned to me as I stood there in the long window in my pale blue dress, looking at her.

"*Bon Dieu du bois!*" she said. "The delicate white creature, come back to Saint-Yriac after these hundred years and more!"

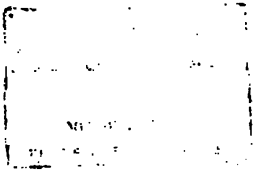
And I felt those green eyes of hers run through me.

"Old carrion! What is that to you?"

She grinned a little as she picked up her willow switch, with the three green leaves on the tip. "Nothing, perhaps,



"Hein, my Camille!" said the old woman, just like that.
"The same saucy boy as ever, I see."



to me" she answered. "But monseigneur the Marquis—what pleasure is in store for him!"

She turned to her cow, which had been pulling mouthfuls off the clematis while the fight was going on. Papa danced up and down with fury, so that the old creature had disappeared among the laburnum trees before papa found his voice to speak.

"After her, Gustave! Chase them like mad dogs, her and her cow. Chase them down to the devil! Ah! Ah!"

So Gustave threw down his salver and dashed after them. Then in a moment, oh, what crashing of branches, what shouts, what screams, what bellowings!

Papa came back to the table, breathing hard. "Thousand thunders! Ah! Ah! the old witch! Did she think, then, that she was serving her sacred pig of a master, to remind me anew what good cause we have, we Poizelles, to curse those robbers and ravishers up on the hill?"

Just then I noticed a very strange thing. As papa sat down in his place again, I saw that his fingers were all doubled up, and crossed and twisted, just as when I have seen him meet some old friend who is a freemason.

"Papa," I said, "what is the matter with your hands?"

He laughed, a little bit consciously. "Nothing, my child. But when I was a boy here in Saint-Yriac, it was said by all that Mother Jobard—who was as old then as she is now, my faith!—but it was said by all that she, like her master, had the evil eye."

"It was truly said!" cried Aunt Julienne, and crossed herself with her crossed fingers.

So I crossed myself in the same way, as nearly as I could manage. "And the Marquis, also," I asked, "he also has the evil eye?"

"Is that a question," shouted papa, "to be doubted by a Poizelle?" Then,

as he saw me jump and spill my glass of water, he grew calmer. "My Joujou, remember this, that for the dweller in Saint-Yriac nothing is so evil as the eye of the Marquis. Though, thanks to our good little Revolution, it can no longer work the misery that it could in the old days, more than a century ago."

Ah! No wonder it has a terrible look, that chateau, since the gentleman who lives there has the evil eye, and is more than a hundred years old—I never knew before that people could live to be so frightfully old.

But, then, I have learned so much to-day! For till I came to Normandy, it seems to me that I did not know papa as he really is. In Paris he is keen and smiling, and talks always about business, with auntie or with Monsieur Boussard. But here in his ancient home of childhood, so near to this wicked old Marquis—how full of superstition he can be, how strange, how violent!

III.

IT has been beautiful here in Saint-Yriac this past month; and everything would be quite pleasant and happy if only it weren't for all the unfortunate things that happened that first night at Villa Clematis. For it seems that Gustave chased the poor cow so hard up the hill that when she finally arrived home at the chateau, she fell down dead in a kind of fit. And the notary of the Marquis holds papa responsible.

So, the other day, papa came bursting into the dining-room, where auntie and I sat embroidering the new napkins from Paris. His face was purple and his hand trembled with rage, as he thrust under

our noses the big sheet of paper that he held in his hand.

"Look at this!" he said, choking with fury. So I looked. Monsieur Camille Poizelle, proprietor, Saint-Yriac-by-the-Sea, was commanded to appear before the justice of the peace in Dieppe, the following morning, to show just cause why he should not pay the sum of three hundred francs to the plaintiff, the notary of the Marquis of Saint-Yriac, in compensation for the damaging and killing of cow belonging to said Marquis, on the evening of—and so forth; very grand and severe, so that you felt as though you were in jail, just to read it.

Papa turned blue. "To-morrow," he said, "I go to Dieppe, to face the Marquis's notary and to meet his claim. But the next day—thousand thunders!—the next day I go to Dieppe once more, to the honorable justice of the peace. I take with me in my automobile you, my sister, and you, Gustave. I enter action, with

these witnesses, against the Marquis of Saint-Yriac for wilful trespass upon my domain, and damages to my lawns and clematis vines, a thousand francs."

"Brother," cried Aunt Julienne, "is this wise?"

"Name of a dog!" shouted papa. "The days are done when Poizelle must tremble before Saint-Yriac. The wolf's claws are cut—all that remains is to see him dance to our tune—ah, the good farce!"

Auntie was quite agitated at the notion of this trip to Dieppe, especially as it was only two or three days now before our guests arrived from Paris. So the next day, after papa had gone off to Dieppe, auntie spent the whole day in the kitchen with Victor, the chef, making, oh! such lovely things: truffled *galantines* of turkey, *savarins* with *rhum de la Jamaïque*, strawberry tarts, and dear little sweet *babas*. I think that even the great Octave Boussard, of the Jockey Club and the Epatant,

would be pleased if he could see our pantry shelves! Beside that, there was a lot of fussing to do with our new dresses that have just arrived from Paris; black satin and gray silk for auntie, and for me—oh, such ugly things! blue gingham, and thick white muslins, and brown linens, with brown horn buttons. It appears that I am to make a nice modest impression upon them, these stylish friends of papa!

But in the afternoon, as Johanne had to stay and help with the tarts, auntie said that I might go out and walk by myself, upon condition that I did not leave papa's domain. Bah! as though the forest, on our side of the picket fence, were not the most beautiful place to walk in in the whole world.

So I started up the hill-side, dodging through the trees and scaring the little wild things into the underbrush. It seemed lovely to be there all alone in the woods, with the leaves green and sunny, high up over my head; and every little

while when I came to a clear place in the forest and turned around to look, the Channel, all blue and sparkling below me, with the brown sails moving on it, and the white cliffs stretching off misty to Dieppe.

I was glad that poor old Johanne was not with me to spoil things with ridiculous talk of ghosts. So I ran here and I ran there, picking wild flowers and looking for a tree with low-growing branches that I could climb—as there was nobody by to tell me that it was not lady-like.

Then, all of a sudden, I slipped on a broken branch and went rolling headlong down a little slope; when I picked myself up, behold! I seemed to have outrun the very day itself.

For below me, in a little dip in the hill, lay a garden—a gray old garden, like a grave hidden away in the cheerful green forest. A border of boxwood marked it off, squared and levelled; little, mossy, damp-looking paths wound away and lost themselves under the trees. They were

so old, these trees, so covered with boles and black toadstool-looking things, that it seemed strange to see the fresh green leaves on them; and the shrubbery looked old, too, all cut in strange shapes and straggling wild. Here and there were broken stone benches, set among the scarlet poppies that grew wild everywhere; and sad-looking, mouldy marble statues, with broken noses and ears. In the middle of all was the stone basin of a fountain, tumble-down and filled with poppies and grass; there was a broken marble nymph in the centre, a tiny stream of muddy water still trickling from the mouldy sea-shell in her hand. And at the far end of the garden, built up on a kind of terrace, with a wide carved staircase and dingy marble ornaments, a little summer-house, fallen into ruins like the rest—a pavilion of marble that once was white, I suppose, stained, weather-beaten, deserted.

I felt afraid, just for a moment; it seemed wicked for me to be there. For

this was a place that someone had built to be happy in—and, oh, how long ago he must be dead!

So, very quietly, I tiptoed down the little green path and up the stairs to the summer-house. It was empty but for a broad stone seat running around two sides of it, under the arched windows. The floor was laid in marble flags, with the green moss growing between, and the whole place smelled mouldy and damp.

I walked over to the window and sat down, and looked down into the garden which lay below me. Everything was still, very still, except for the long grass rippling so softly in the wind, and the yellow bees zoum-zouming about in the sunshine from one crimson poppy to another.

I wondered who had planted them, these poppies; who had built the pavilion and the foundation, and who had walked first down the path to the wide stone steps. I remembered what Johanne had so often

said, about the forest being haunted—and yet I was not afraid.

No, I felt different—quite different from ever before; older, somehow, and peaceful and happy, as though I had found my own place at last. I sat there a long time, but the feeling did not pass away. If it is really haunted, this garden, I am sure at least that they are kind and gentle ghosts, and glad of a little company!

IV.

I DO not know, but perhaps I fell asleep, with my head resting on the crumbled stone sill of the window, all warm in the sunshine. Because the next thing that I remember, the sun was gone down behind the trees; and when I lifted my head and looked down through the garden, there was someone half hidden among the grass and the flowers, kneeling beside the fountain.

At first I thought it might be one of papa's new gardeners or foresters; he has an army of them ranging over the place. Then a puff of wind set the garden waving, and I saw the flash of something blue among the grasses. This time, I do not

mind owning it, my heart stood still. For though it was a month ago that I had seen her, I had not forgotten the handkerchief of blue wool that bound the head of the wicked old Mother Jobard!

Ah, *mon Dieu!* what were ghosts, after all, that one should fear them, beside the evil eye of that old woman, which cuts like a knife?

I got up very softly, and tiptoed to the door. I thought, perhaps, that I might creep away safe through the woods, if I was very cautious and brave. The old woman in the grass did not stir, or turn her head; but all of a sudden, just as I had reached the doorway, "Why does mademoiselle run away?" she said.

Ah, was I terrified? I stood quite still, trembling from head to foot, and wishing that my good old Johanne was there beside me. Mother Jobard rose to her feet and came slowly down the long path toward me, her hands full of dead flowers and withered sprigs of box. I stood

still because I was too frightened to move; and I noticed that her face was all shrivelled like a maple leaf in October, and she had gold rings in her ears. As for her eyes, I dared not look at them.

So I waited, quite helpless, till she stood at the foot of the steps and looked up at me. "Mademoiselle," she said, "you will not be angry with her, you will not punish her for her boldness, the poor old Mother Jobard?"

I stared at her to see if she were joking with me; but her queer, green eyes looked up at me, quite seriously and almost soft, with something in them that made me feel sorry instead of afraid. But, all the same, I twisted up my fingers, as papa had done that evening a month ago. Then I pulled one or two long breaths, just to steady my heart, which was banging my ribs in the most uncomfortable way. When I had found my voice, I looked down at Mother Jobard with the most unconcerned air you ever

saw. "What are you doing here?" I said, just as though I were not a single scrap afraid.

She did not make her eyes glitter at me, as I had almost feared. She answered me quite meekly.

"Mademoiselle, I have no right here, I know that well. This land is no longer my master's; it is now the domain of monsieur your papa—yes, I know! But, you see, this garden—it is like my child, and if I did not cherish it, the forest would eat it up."

So she was at work, this strange old woman, on the weeds and the fallen twigs. Now, no one could deny that that was nice of her, at any rate. So I said:

"It was too bad, the other night, about your cow!"

She looked up at me, and for a moment I thought I saw the green sparkle in her eyes. However, my fingers were safely criss-crossed; and her eyes were quite solemn again as she answered:

"What does that signify? For now that she is dead, she is dead."

This was not very encouraging, and, besides, it was growing late. So I turned to go. Mother Jobard stretched out her hand. "One moment, mademoiselle!"

So just to show her that I was not afraid, I came down into the garden, with Mother Jobard and the silent old statues. She looked at me very kindly.

"Mademoiselle is pleased with it, this old garden?"

"Very much," I said, trying to be polite.

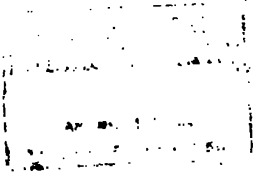
"Very well, I have made it ready. It is all done for her."

"For me!"

"For you, mademoiselle, for whom it was built. So you will come here often, will you not? For it is so many years; and it grows weary, the poor old garden, listening for the return of your beloved footfall!"



"No, mademoiselle! There is nothing to fear.
In this garden mademoiselle is at home."



I began to think she must be a little bit crazy, this tall old woman, bending toward me so thin and dark and eager. I began to edge away toward the steps again, but she looked at me and smiled.

"No, mademoiselle! There is nothing to fear. In this garden mademoiselle is at home—as for me, I vanish! Adieu, mademoiselle."

So off she flitted through the dark horse-chestnut trees.

I intended to tell papa all about it that evening, but he came back from Dieppe in such a rage at the Marquis that it seemed mean to tell him anything that would make him any angrier. Poor papa! It seems that he had a very unfortunate day. For the justice of the peace not only settled the case against him and made him pay the three hundred francs and the costs beside, but the notary of the Marquis, who appeared against papa, was quite rude, and made remarks about

upstart millionaires, and peasants riding in automobiles that ought to belong to the Marquis.

"Name of a dog!" says papa. "We will crush him, this insolent aristocrat. To-morrow I bring my suit for trespass, and then, ah! ah! if there is any justice in France, you shall see, my children; you shall see!"

That evening when Johanne was brushing my hair, before I went to bed, I asked her if she had ever heard of an old pleasure garden up there in the forest on the hill-side—and then, "Ouch!" for Johanne jumped half-way across the room, and with her a handful of my hair.

"Now you have done it, Johanne!" I said, quite crossly. For a handful of hair —that hurts, you know.

But Johanne still stared at me. "The garden—then mademoiselle has seen it? The old tales are true, after all?"

"You know about this garden? Tell me, Johanne!"

"It is no tale for you to hear, mademoiselle—and no place for you to see," answered Johanne, in a shocked kind of tone, just like auntie the day I asked her to tell me about the Moulin Rouge.

"Johanne, tell me, who built it, that old garden?"

"Little imbecile! who could possibly have built it but the Marquis of Saint-Yriac himself!"

Ah, but fancy being as old as those mossy trees, and the mouldy nymph in the centre of the fountain. "But, Johanne," I said, "tell me, why did he build it?"

She hesitated a moment. "How do I know? It was so long ago. But the story goes, among the old people in Saint-Yriac, that he built it for——"

"For whom, Johanne?"

"*Bon Dieu du bois*, does one say such things to a young girl? Very well, then! For—an ancestress of your own."

"That was kind of him. I thought he had always treated our family so cruelly."

"Listen to the child! Do you not find it cruel, then, to steal a woman away from her husband, her children, her family?"

"Ah, poor thing! That was different, of course. Did they ever get her back again?"

"When the Revolution opened the prisons of France, and the Marquis fled for his life—yes, then they brought her home again, it is said."

"Ah, how glad she must have been!'

"Perhaps. But the story runs that when the year was out, and the Marquis not returned, she threw herself into the fountain, in the centre of the garden that the Marquis had built for her."

"Johanne, she drowned herself?"

"How do I know? That is what they say! As for me, I eat my dinner. I do not concern myself with what happened so long ago."

Johanne turned to go. "Wait just one moment," I said. "Johanne, tell me—what did she mean, that strange old creature, when she said that some one had come back to Saint-Yriac after a hundred and fifty years? Was she thinking of this story, I wonder, when she looked at me?"

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Johanne. "That old woman—she is of a stupidity to cut with a knife. You see, mademoiselle, she has never been to Paris, the poor old creature. As for me, what do I care for their old tales and prophecies of Saint-Yriac? Bah! I snap my fingers at them." And she cracked her big red knuckles, and laughed in scorn. But all the same, I noticed that the fingers of the other hand were carefully criss-crossed as she mentioned the name of Mother Jobard. Poor old Johanne!

V.

THE next day it rained a little in the morning, so that papa could not start off to Dieppe so early as he had wished. At last, however, the clouds broke and the mist rolled away over the Channel. The sun came out hot and bright, and papa had the automobile brought around to the door. Auntie was vexed at being hurried off just before lunch, because she said it was useless extravagance to pay papa's good money to a hotel at Dieppe for what was all ready at home. Much papa cared for that; he was in a rush to get over to the justice of the peace, and enter his complaint against the Marquis. So into the automobile they hurried, and

Gustave after them, in his new livery, grinning all over at the notion of a day in Dieppe.

Then touf-touf-touf! they all disappeared down the avenue of laburnums and almond trees. I was left alone for the day—alone, free to do as I pleased, for the first time in my life.

It was hard to know just what to do. All of a sudden, I had an idea! The sun was so warm, the air so clear, that the woods must be pretty nearly dry again. My garden was still there behind the trees on the hill-side. On such a fine morning, who cared for all the ghost stories in the world? So—here is the idea! I would take my lunch up the hill with me, instead of eating it at home, and have a little picnic there among the poppies, all by myself.

So I went downstairs and asked Victor, the chef, to give me something for my picnic. He has a kind heart, I am sure; because he went to work and spent ever

so long getting things ready for me. Lots of little white sandwiches, cut in diamonds, and stuffed with chicken and things chopped up in cream cheese; slices of bread and butter spread with lovely soft, dripping brown sugar,—*my* idea! Victor turned up his nose and smiled in a patient sort of way when I explained to him,—a *meringue* with cherries, a *Madeline* and a lot of little *babas*. Then, while he filled a dear little flask with Burgundy and water, I looked about for a basket to pack all the nice things in; but nothing could I find—not a single basket or even a box. So I took a soup-tureen down from the shelf—an old white thing with a red band. Victor laughed, but he took out the eggs that were in it, and packed the sandwiches and cakes into it so nicely; then he took up the cover—but there was a great big empty space above the napkin. But I had an idea—one of the strawberry start that auntie had made yesterday!

So the tart went in last of all, on top of everything. I thanked Victor, and went off with my tureen; I could hear him laughing to one of the house-maids, and telling her about it, as I closed the door. But what did I care? So I tied on my hat and took a rug to sit on, and looked about for a book,—just as a matter of form. I knew I couldn't find any,—the one thing left to make my picnic a perfect success, something interesting to read!

But when I started off through the woods up the hill-side, with my rug on one arm and my tureen under the other, with the moss and the bark smelling wet and lovely, and the birds whirring in the branches above my head, it seemed to me that nothing was lacking, after all! Finally I came to the cleared place in the trees; and then the garden.

Oh, how pretty it looked, lying there in the sunshine! Trees and statues, poppies and grass, all fresh-washed from the

rain. I ran down through the boxwood hedge, along the little green path to the fountain. The water was spouting quite splendidly from the sea-shell in the middle, and the nymph who held it looked so proud and pleased, poor old thing, that the rain had given her something to do.

The basin of the fountain was broken and sunk along the edge, and choked with flowers and grass. But as I looked into it, I could not help remembering the story that Johanne had told me last night —my skin stirred as though a cold wind had blown over me, and my heart beat quick. For a moment I had to clinch my teeth and shut my eyes, to prevent myself from running away.

That was foolish; for it all happened long ago, my poor little ancestress; and as Mother Jobard had said of the cow, now that she is dead, she is dead. But all around me the garden was alive, grasshoppers jumping, and bees blundering about, and a bluebird in the roof of the

pavilion, singing so prettily. It was all warm, and blossomy, and gay. I forgot to be afraid, as I spread out my rug on the grass beside the fountain and started to unpack my soup-tureen. The things had come splendidly, hardly smashed a bit; so I spread them out on the napkin, with the tart in the middle, all red and white and juicy, with the cherry *meringue* next to it. Then, as my hard morning's work and my climb had made me very hungry, I started right in on my sandwiches. Oh, but they were good, those sandwiches!

Suddenly, on the other side of the fountain, I caught sight of something dark lying upon the side of the stone basin. At first I was silly enough to be a little bit frightened, and sat quite still, biting into a sandwich and staring across with my eyes wide open. Then I remembered how foolish I had been when I let myself be afraid, the last time. So I just jumped up and went over and picked it

up, and behold! nothing but a book, an old, old book, bound in calf and with long S's and such strange, twirly capitals, just like the old breviary in the oratory of St. Veronica's.

However, that made no difference, it seemed like too much luck—something to read; just what I wanted, just when I wanted it more than ever before.

So I took it back to the rug, and went on eating my sandwiches and drinking my wine and water. It puzzled me, that book. Who could have left it here, on the edge of the fountain, in papa's domain? I looked to see if any name was written on it. But, no, just under the cover there was a book-plate, brown and stained, with a splendid coat of arms and a Latin motto that I could not read. It was not Mother Jobard's, at any rate! So as I had the book itself, in any case, it seemed foolish to waste my time wondering over it—especially as it looked very interesting, and I could see for myself that no

conceited person had been over it with a knife, scratching out words and writing in ridiculous things of his own instead.

So I began on my bread and butter and brown sugar, and took up the book. Part of it seemed to be poetry, part a story all about the man who had written the poetry. His name was Alain Chartier—that is a pretty name, I think, Alain! And he died, oh! ever so long before I was born—hundreds and hundreds of years. It is hard to realize that anyone lived, or died, either, as long ago as that.

But, oh, how charming must it have been to live then—with kings and queens in the old palaces of France! There were knights then, too, it seems, and tournaments, and battles every day with the wicked English invaders; then at sunset the chevalier would come riding home victorious, and the lovely lady would lean down from her lattice and give him her hand to kiss; and if he had killed a great many people that day, perhaps the rose

from her hair. It was all so interesting, I came near forgetting to eat my *Madeline*. So I finished it to the last crumb, then I took up the *meringue* puff with the cherries and cream inside. Oh, how I was enjoying myself!

So I went on reading. The story seemed to get prettier and prettier, for soon it came to a garden, an old, old garden, that was old when this one was planted, I dare say. But it was no ordinary garden, for it belonged to the Queen of France herself; think of that! And one day as she was walking there among the flowers, she came upon the poet, upon Alain himself, fallen asleep in an arbor. Now, she loved his poetry very much indeed; so she stood for a long while and looked at him. Then she stooped—she, the Queen, and the most beautiful woman in France—and kissed him on the lips. And when he woke up she had gone away, so he never knew anything about it—never, never! which



The story seemed to get prettier and prettier.



seems almost a pity, when you think of it.

When I had finished that story, I just had to put down the book for a while, and think. My lunch was all gone, the tureen was empty, except for the strawberry tart. It looked so nice that I made up my mind that I must save it for a little while, and eat it later. For now it was no use trying to think about anything but Alain and this beautiful dead lady of long ago—I wonder, if I had been the Queen of France, whether I should have done the same!

I covered up my tart with the tureen turned upsidedown, and started out to walk around among the flowers and the statues; and, like a baby, I pretended to myself that I was in the book I had been reading—the Queen of France herself, perhaps, the beautiful Marguerite, walking in her garden all alone. I went up the wide green, mossy steps, very stately, to the pavilion.

Now, it's all very well to play games with yourself, and pretend things; but when you find things themselves pretending, that is the time you begin to feel a little bit creepy! I gasped with surprise, I stood staring, then I turned and flew down the steps again, as quick and silent as my feet would carry me.

For there, stretched out on the broad stone ledge under the windows of the pavilion, alive and real, with hands and hair and high russet leather riding-boots —yes, just as sure as my eyes told me the truth, there lay exactly what I had been pretending to myself, just for fun —a young man, fast asleep!

I stood for a moment by the fountain, staring up at the pavilion. After all, had my eyes told me the truth?

I bit my thumb, to make sure that I was not dreaming. Was I really Joujou, after all? And if I was—which I had to believe—then who could he be, this young man? How had he come here? Had

he been here, sound asleep, all the time that I was eating my bread and butter and brown sugar, and reading in his book? For the book—of course it was his—and no name written in it, none at all, just on purpose to be provoking!

The Marquis? But the Marquis was old, a hundred years! Octave Boussard? But he should not come till to-morrow night! But, after all, what did it matter who he was, this sleeper? For now he was Alain Chartier, and I was the Queen of France.

So I crept back into the pavilion very softly, tiptoeing over the wide, mossy flags. There he was lying on the hard, cold stone, and oh, how long he stretched out over the window-seat! I trembled a little—I do not know why, for there was nothing ugly about him. No, quite the opposite; and his skin was tanned a bright red with the sun, just like an American.

But, though I trembled a little bit, I was not afraid—no, not a scrap! For I had only to look at his face to know quite well that he would not hurt me, even if he were awake; or be anything that was not kind—yes, good and pleasant.

So I tiptoed a little nearer and looked down at him. Ah! he was young, I could see that; but still I do not think that his life can have been a happy one, like mine. I don't know, but his lips were pressed together in a curve like the old abbé at the convent, proud and yet patient, too. And his eyes, though I could not see them, I felt quite sure that, when they were open, they were merry and kind, yet filled with something like sadness, as though all his life he had missed almost everything nice, and knew that he never would have it, and must just get along without it. It made me feel sad, too, somehow, to see him look like that. And I wished, oh! how I wished, that I could do some little thing

for him, to make him a little happier.

Now, of course it was silly of me, but I couldn't help remembering my strawberry tart, down there beside the fountain, under the soup-tureen. It was just a little thing, of course, but then it was something! And, after sleeping so long on that hard stone, too, I was sure that he would be hungry when he woke up. So I flew down to the garden, quite softly. There was the tart, all safe; no ants or spiders or anything had got into it. The crust had cracked, just a little flake, and the pink syrup was oozing out; down under the white criss-cross of pastry, I could see Aunt Julienne's strawberries, big and fat and transparent, floating about in a sweet red juice. My heart almost failed me as I looked at it, for I didn't know when I could persuade Victor to give me another. Then I remembered the *meringue*, and all those sandwiches, that I had been eating, greedy pig! It was not so much, to give

away a tart. So I pulled a lot of horse-chestnut leaves, and took the tart, and went back to the pavilion. He was still asleep, that young man, and I moved about like a burglar, terrified for fear of waking him. Because if he should wake and find me, how very rude and queer he'd think it of me!

So I arranged the leaves in a sort of big, dark green star, all spreading outward, and in the centre I laid the tart, all red and white—just opposite him, where he could see it when he woke. It seemed lovely, to think what a surprise he was going to have.

Then, as I turned to go, he gave a little sigh and half turned in his sleep. I was frightened; but he did not stir again, or open his eyes, and somehow that little sigh sounded very sad. I wondered if Alain Chartier had sighed in his sleep when Queen Marguerite stood by his side and looked down at him. After all, a tart is not much to give, even one of

Aunt Julienne's; and what a queen had given, how could it be wrong for me? It seemed so charming, and then so thrilling, somehow, to do what a Queen of France had done so long ago!

After all, Alain had never known—never, never!

So, without stopping to think, all in a rush, I pushed my hair back with my hands and stooped and kissed his cheek. And he never even stirred!

Why, I do not know; but when it was done, it seemed quite different. As I turned away I was filled with a kind of terror and amazement. What would Aunt Julienne say? What would Sister Angélique say? What would this young man himself say, if he knew how wild and forward I had been?

The only thing for me to do was to get away as quickly as I could. So I never stopped running all the way down the hill-side between the trees, until I came out into the open space in front of the

Villa Clematis. The book about Alain Chartier and the Queen of France I still held in my hand. But, oh, provoking! I had forgotten my soup-tureen.



VI.

WHAT a change here in the Villa Clematis since a week ago! Our company has all arrived —the Boussards, with their famous son, Octave, and his automobile; and Monsieur and Madame Rondolé. Of them all, Madame Boussard is the pleasantest to me, in a fat, serious kind of way, that is; but Madame Rondolé is, oh! ever so much the nicest to look at; with her pretty little pointed face, all white like flour, and big wide-open brown eyes, and such beautiful crimson lips that seem to quiver like a baby's when she smiles—and, oh! such glittering, curly, red hair!

Not that Octave is not good enough to look at, too. He is very nice and

pleasant, in a downright kind of way, with his fair hair cut in a brush over his forehead, and his laugh that shakes the candle-shades—just like an Englishman. Indeed, he is very English, this Octave, and he talks of nothing but the lawn tennis, the golf, and the Jockey Club. Not, of course, that he talks to me of these things—or of anything else, in fact!

It's just "Good-morning, mademoiselle," and "Good-morning, monsieur," and "Do you like the country, mademoiselle?" "Yes, monsieur." "Myself, I like the country in England. Here in France one finds so few sports that amuse!" However, I hear enough about him from his mother—all that I need to know, even if I am to marry him! For I sit by her at the table, and in the afternoon I sit and hold her wool for her on the piazza and listen to her tell all about Octave and the peculiarities of his character, while Octave laughs and whispers with Madame Rondolé; and

papa and Monsieur Boussard and old Monsieur Rondolé all sit and smoke their cigars and talk about Algerians and American Copper.

Not very amusing, my faith! And never a chance to take a walk on the beach, or in the woods. However, I must not think of that.

And, worst of all, almost, I have to wear such very ugly dresses now, so as to make a nice, modest impression on Madame Boussard, auntie says. Not even my little blue organdie any more—but brown linens and stiff white lawns, with brown linen embroidery and black buttons, and a great big thick belt, as loose as possible. Madame Rondolé's waist is so small, it is quite wonderful to watch her eat her dinner, and think to yourself where it goes to. When I am married, I intend to have a waist like that, too.

For I suppose it is as good as settled that I am to marry Octave Boussard.

"My child," says papa, "here is young Boussard, very eligible, no tuberculosis in the family, inheritance thirty million francs; his mother is ravished with your piety, his father is satisfied with your *dot*. The young man himself finds no objection. Upon my word! it looks as though the marriage were made in Heaven!"

Somehow, all the time he was talking, I kept thinking of the garden, and Queen Marguerite and Alain Chartier. "So it is all settled, papa?" I asked, meekly.

"No, not what you would call settled yet. The summer lies before us. In the meantime you will mention the affair to no one. Time enough, time enough!"

After all, it is a simple business, this of marriage—if one hadn't in one's mind the memory of another face that keeps coming back, and coming back, in the queerest way.

However, that is none of it very interesting compared to what happened to-day. Miss Hazel Walker arrived!

Just before lunch Johanne was dressing me, and fussing about the soup-tureen. It appears that Victor used it always to keep his cooking eggs in, and now they roll all about the kitchen, and auntie is so vexed. Ah, I must go and have another hunt for it in the garden some day soon.

When the last black pin was stuck into my sash, suddenly I heard the touf-touf of the automobile, and voices and all kinds of clatter downstairs, and I knew that she had come, our new guest; so I hung over the banisters and peeped over for a little while before I went downstairs.

Yes, there was auntie bowing and shaking hands, and papa smiling and rubbing his fingers together, and the Boussards and Madame Rondolé and everybody, all talking at once. And in the middle, oh! such a great, tall girl, like a marble goddess, with such a fresh, clear skin and a plain duck tailor-made, stiff and glistening.

She was talking a little bit slowly, with a sort of an accent that made it hard for me to understand what she was saying, from away at the top of the stairs. But, oh, how healthy she looked, how strong and how clean! Somehow, beside her, Madame Rondolé didn't look so very pretty any more.

"Joujou," called papa, and I tiptoed back to my room and then called: "Yes, papa," and came downstairs, trying not to look so frightened as I felt. However, there was nothing to be afraid of, after all; Miss Hazel Walker gave me a grip of her hand like an Englishman, and, oh! such a kind, friendly smile. Then she turned to the others and went on telling about her trip down from Paris, and what good time they had made, and how lucky she had been to find papa's automobile at Dieppe.

"When anything goes as quick as that, one hasn't much time to find it you know!" Her voice was so thick and

deep and laughing, with its funny little accent and queer grammar, I understand now what people mean when they say that the prettiest language in the world is French, spoken by an American girl!

"So you left poor Monsieur de Castaignac at Dieppe," said papa; "that was hard, when he had brought you all the way from Paris!"

Miss Walker laughed. "All the more reason," she said, "that he shouldn't bring me any further. And, besides, I am sure that your automobile is much nicer than his."

"Wait till you have tried mine!" cried Octave. And then Johanne came to take Miss Walker up to her room. I followed, too. I was a little bit afraid of her, she carried herself so stiff and erect, like a soldier, and there was something so downright in her voice; as though she had never told a fib, or been afraid of anything, in her whole life.

I went into her room with her. "You have everything you need, mademoiselle?" I asked, while Johanne opened her big yellow bag—just like an Englishman's—and took out, oh! such beautiful silver toilet things, and bottles of perfumery and violet water—all Perfumery Poizelle, I was glad of that—and a Baedeker, and a box of chocolate, and all sorts of things.

I was going downstairs, but she asked me to stay with her while she dressed; and, oh! *mon Dieu*, but it was amusing to watch her! Her underclothes were lovely, all covered with lace and embroidery, just like a married lady's. Indeed, it appears that in America you don't have to wait till you are married to wear pretty petticoats and high-heeled shoes; and I think that must be very nice, because one grows so tired of plain hems after eighteen years.

However, I hadn't much time to think, because she kept talking all the time and

asking me about the automobile, and the casino at Dieppe, and whether I played golf, and liked to swim. Luckily she was so busy splashing cold water about, and brushing her hair, that she never noticed whether I answered or not; which was fortunate, because I had nothing to answer!

I never saw anybody dress so quickly. Poor old Johanne just stood holding a bottle of alcohol in one hand and a pair of silk stockings in the other, while Miss Walker snapped everything into place like machinery. And when she was done —I had thought she was neat before, but now! Her light brown hair was brushed smooth, like satin, and clamped down all over her head with combs and bits of yellow tortoise-shell, all except a little high puff over her forehead.

Her face was tanned with the sun, a bright, rosy brown, so that Aunt Julienne would have groaned with horror; but, really, in Miss Walker it looked almost

prettier than a white skin like Madame Rondolé's. Then her dress—another plain white duck tailor-made, with a long, plain coat and brass buttons, not a scrap of lace anywhere—except underneath, of course!—and her big, loose belt, as loose as mine, though it was plain that if she wanted to squeeze she could have a smaller waist than even Madame Rondolé herself! It seemed queer to me; I couldn't understand it, when she seemed to do everything else as she pleased.

However, that was none of my affair; and when she was dressed, the stiff white piqué stock knotted and fastened down with a big red pin with a white H on it—I didn't like to ask her what it meant; I suppose some kind of freemasons that she belongs to in America—and just a scrap of powder on the end of her nose—when she was all dressed and ready, she picked up the Baedeker from the toilet table.

"Now, you see," she said, "I don't want to ask questions about the place of

everybody I meet. Let me see, Saint-Yriac-by-the-Sea—here we are! You'll excuse me just a moment if I read about it, won't you? The village, chateau, ghosts, and principal industries? This is fine!"

But in just a moment the bell rang for the second breakfast, and downstairs we went together. It was funny to watch them all as they looked at Miss Walker —Papa and Mamma Boussard, who held their noses up and stared at her in a kind of pitying way; Madame Rondolé, who looked at the American sideways, through and through, whenever her head was turned the other way; and poor little auntie, who seemed almost afraid at having a real Anglo-Saxon at the table. Papa kept helping her to things and asking her questions about America.

"But you mustn't judge all America by me," she said. "We aren't all pigs there —but as for me, you see, I haven't had

anything to eat since Paris, a little after sunrise."

Octave made me laugh. He is very English, always, but now! He had put on a suit of rough tweeds, and he talked of nothing but the golf and the Jockey Club, and every other word was *Jove* and *smar-rt*. Miss Walker looked at him—straight at him, like another man.

"I have seen you before, monsieur," she said.

"Mademoiselle, I am flattered at your notice. Where was it?"

"At Joseph's, after the play."

"Mademoiselle!" cried Madame Boussard, bristling with horror. "You take supper at Joseph's?"

"That was when I first came to Paris," answered Miss Walker, laughing. "I don't feel obliged to go there any more now, or to the Inferno, either, or to the Moulin Rouge!"

"Ah, the audacity!" murmured Madame Boussard, in a pious, shocked

kind of tone. "I hope, mademoiselle, that it was not at either of these places that you saw my son!"

I thought that Octave looked rather frightened for a minute. "No, *indeed*," cried Miss Walker; "just at Joseph's—and, do you know, I took him for an Englishman."

Octave looked so pleased. "Really, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, monsieur. For when the waiter brought you the check you said 'Dam!' —just like that. And then you asked him how much it would be in shillings!"

"Oh, he is a rude rabbit, that boy of mine!" cried Papa Boussard, and everybody at the table screamed with laughter —even Octave. For there's one thing that seems nice about him, he never gets angry at a joke against himself. That will be very convenient, probably, when we are married!

Suddenly, just as the currants and sugar were being passed around at

dessert, Miss Walker turned to papa again.

"Now, I want to know all about this beautiful place," said she. "I have been reading in Baedeker, and I know that the village dates from Rollo, and the chateau from the twelfth century; but, oh! tell me, do the Saint-Yriacs live there now, and do you know them, and have they any ghosts, and are they nice?"

There was a kind of awful silence, while I thought of the cow, and hardly dared glance at papa.

"No, mademoiselle," he answered, "they are not very nice, the Saint-Yriacs —the oldest, the proudest, the wickedest line in France!"

Yes, it was droll, but he seemed actually proud of them, of their crimes and their nobility. And when Octave remarked: "The Marquis of Saint-Yriac? I have met him once or twice myself, at the Epatant," papa looked at him quite impressed and respectful, and

Miss Walker cried: "A real, live marquis? Now, you know, that is the kind of thing that really pleases an American."

"But, ah, mademoiselle," responded papa, "it would not please you, I think, to hear the tale of his evil deeds, his exactions, the shameful injuries which his family has inflicted upon mine in the old days. Ah! Ah!" And he began to turn purple and stare wild out of his eyes, like that first night in Saint-Yriac, when Mother Jobard plagued him about the cow.

"My dear brother," said auntie, "we will let the old days rest where they are. Miss Walker, will you have some coffee?"

So while papa was frowning and breathing hard and muttering to himself about aristocrats, and the rights of man, and, the cow, everybody began to drink coffee, and talk about the Golf Club, where we were all going after lunch.

So when we had finished, I went upstairs with Miss Walker while she changed her shoes for a pair of great, heavy things like a man's, with big rubber warts sticking out all over the soles. Then she put on a little white hat with a red ribbon around it that matched the pin, and slung over her shoulder her big bag of golf clubs—so interesting, near to, something between a broom-handle and a croquet mallet. As for me, I still wore my whity-brown dress with an ugly linen pelisse over it; and a little black straw hat with a black veil tied around to keep the sun from freckling me. Very modest, my faith, and so ugly!

When we came downstairs papa was still rather red and puffy; but he piled the Boussards and Monsieur Rondolé and Aunt Julienne into the automobile and whizzed off. Then Octave's, as usual, with Madame Rondolé in front; but behind, instead of Johanne, I had Miss Walker. That was different,

indeed! And even if we had not passed the other automobile, and everything else on the road, the way would have seemed to me less than half as long as ever before to the Golf Club.

It seems curious—a little while ago I heard of nothing but hereditary wrongs, and the evil eye, and strange, haunting tales of the past; and then the garden that I dreamed about; till I didn't know if I was myself, or the little ancestress that died so long ago or perhaps the Queen of France—*belle dame du temps jadis!*

But to-day there is no mistake about it. This is to-day, and I am Joujou! But I wonder, will those old days ever come back?

VII.

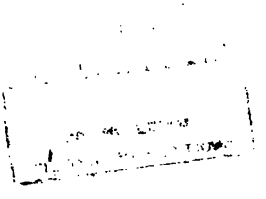
WHEN we arrived at the Golf Club, which is just outside of Dieppe, a beautiful stretch of fields above the cliffs, with sheep feeding over it and such a funny little old Englishman to keep the gate—the moment we arrived, Miss Walker threw off her coat and hat and snapped her fingers for a boy to carry her bag. "Caddie!" she said.

"What!" cried Madame Rondolé. "You are going to play?"

Miss Walker stared. "Certainly; aren't you?" Though that was rather a ridiculous question to ask of Madame Rondolé, as she stood there in her rose-pink foulard ruffles, and her pink lace



Madame Rondolé arranged her parasol more carefully against the sun.



parasol blowing in the wind. She was pretty, no doubt. But, somehow, beside that plain white duck and smooth hair, without a bit of trimming or a curl anywhere, she looked overdressed, almost untidy. And I could see where the powder cracked around her eyes in little tiny lines.

"Come, miss, will you *tee-off?*" cried Octave, so proud of his English words. Miss Walker rolled up the sleeves of her white blouse, and showed her two arms, round and pretty, but tanned brown with the sun—brown, I give you my word, like the fisherwomen of Saint-Yriac! Madame Rondolé shivered with horror, and arranged her parasol more carefully against the sun. "Heavens!" she murmered to herself. "They are nothing but boys in petticoats, these American girls!"

I thought that it would be great fun to watch the game; but heavens! they started off like two automobiles across

the fields, banging the balls along before them. So that I saw in a moment that it was no use for me to try to keep up, and I went back to sit with papa and the others, on the lawn in front of the club-house.

There were English people all around us, talking to each other in that funny way of theirs, as though they had forgotten they were talking at all, and drinking tea as fast as the servants could bring it to them. "Later on, when the golfers return, we shall have some *five-o'clock*, we also," says papa, "but until then, name of a dog! I find this place about as amusing as Piccadilly!"

Pretty soon a very elegant gentleman, tall and with the mustaches of a cavalry officer, came up and talked to Madame Rondolé. Oh, *mon Dieu*, but she seemed glad to see him! She introduced him to papa and the rest as Monsieur de Castaignac; then she lowered her pink parasol between us, and one

could hear nothing but little laughs and chatterings from the other side.

The Boussards wandered off, with Monsieur Rondolé, to see if they could get sight of their famous son, from a little knoll near by. Papa yawned some more; then, with a brilliant thought, he declared his intention of taking the automobile and going immediately down to the town. "I must telephone this afternoon," said he, "to my little Perfumery in Paris, on this latest consignment of soap. And also, what is of more importance, I must go to the office of the justice of the peace. He telephoned me this morning, the Marquis is to be there this afternoon. And who knows? Perhaps he will give judgment to-day, the little magistrate, on my action for trespass against this sacred hog of an aristocrat!"

So off he went, and Aunt Julienne, who was as bored as he, went with him. So I sat there alone, beside Madame Rondolé

—for she never turned around once, which I thought rather mean of her. I couldn't help hearing scraps of conversation from behind the parasol—all about different ladies in Paris, and who had given them their diamonds, and how some gentleman had left a lady for another lady, and how Madame Rondolé's eyes drove Monsieur de Castaignac quite wild—such foolish conversation! But I didn't dare to get up and walk about all alone. So, *mon Dieu*, but I was glad when the Boussards came lumbering back, with poor old Monsieur Rondolé, with the good news that Octave and Miss Walker were returning.

So the waiters brought out a pretty little table and set it for us on the lawn, with teacups and bread and butter and jelly-cake—all so English. It reminded me almost of my picnic, except that there weren't such nice things to eat, and—and the people were not the same.

Pretty soon Octave and Miss Walker came tearing up over the slope, with the little boys bumping their bags of clubs behind them. How pretty she looked, Miss Walker! Not hot or untidy, like the English women who came in from the field; but her face flushed a little, and softer, somehow, than it had looked before, and one little lock had escaped from the comb and curled in a tiny ringlet on her cheek. Octave was looking at her sideways, as though he thought the same as I; and when they came up to where we all sat, Monsieur de Castaignac jumped up and clicked his heels together and made a low bow.

"Mademoiselle! What happiness, to see you twice in the same day!"

Miss Walker held out her hand to him. Madame Rondolé stared.

"What! Then you are acquainted, you two?"

"Are we acquainted," cried Miss Walker, "when it was Monsieur de

Castaignac who brought me down from Paris this morning in his automobile!"

"I bid for the return trip!" cried Octave.

Madame Rondolé looked from one to the other with that pretty baby smile of hers, though, somehow, I felt, too, that she was not quite pleased. She said, so sweetly:

"So you made the trip from Paris alone with this famous Adonis, my little Castaignac! *Mon Dieu*, mademoiselle, may I say how I admire your audacity?"

Miss Walker flushed so pink that I knew that Madame Rondolé had meant to be disagreeable.

"Madame," she said, "you are too generous, when one considers that you yourself made the trip a few days ago with Monsieur Boussard!"

Madame Rondolé's voice was so sweet, it sounded like a cat purring. "Ah, but you understand what it is that makes just

the difference here—I am married, you see."

Miss Walker looked straight at her. "Yes," she answered, "in my country, also, that makes just the difference." And just then, luckily, the servants brought tea. Madame Boussard fussed over the teapot and the cups, and Octave kept laughing and telling her how it was done in England; and Monsieur de Castaignac leaned forward and began to tell us all about a friend of his that he had met here in Dieppe.

"One of my brother officers in the cuirassiers," he said. "You may imagine how glad I was to see him here, for a finer young fellow doesn't breathe in France." Madame Boussard gave a kind of snort, and clattered the cups. I think she hates to hear any young man spoken of as nice, but just her Octave.

"Then why don't you present him to us, this officer of cuirassiers?" cried Madame Rondolé.

"In a few moments, madame, I hope to have that honor. Just now he has ridden to Dieppe on a trifling affair of business; and as soon as that is done, he has promised to join me here."

I was sitting there in my brown holland pelisse and my hat with the black ribbons, and nobody taking any notice of me, of course, but Miss Walker occasionally; but all the same, I listened. Monsieur de Castaignac was telling of his friend, and what a sad life he had had.

"His father, I own it to you, had one of the most evil names in France," said he, "and the sums he lost at écarté and at Auteuil were far beyond his power to pay. Consequently he was blackballed in all his clubs and died abroad in disgrace. But when this young fellow came of age, a couple of years ago, what does he do but write to all his father's creditors for a list of the debts, and pay them, every sou, out of his private fortune, left to him by his mother's family!"

"Ah," cried Miss Walker, "how splendid! And did he have anything left?"

"Not a sou, mademoiselle! Indeed, he had to mortgage his land to complete the amount. And this is, in a way, the more creditable of him, because, by all accounts, his father had made his boyhood miserable with violence and neglect; so there could have been no affection in the case—honor, pure and simple."

"And the name of this paragon, what did you say it was?" asked Madame Rondolé, with a yawn.

"I said, madame, Saint-Yriac, the Marquis of Saint-Yriac!"

The Marquis of Saint-Yriac! I said it over slowly to myself, over and over again, while the rest went on talking of golf, and automobiles, and America. So it was not of the sleeper in the pavilion—my Alain Chartier—that this fine story had been told. *He* was still, as ever, a mystery. But it was the old Marquis of

Saint-Yriac, the wicked old creature, of whom I had heard nothing but evil. He had made this sacrifice for the sake of his father's honor, he had done this thing that Miss Walker had called splendid—and with good reason, indeed!

The more I thought, the more I could make nothing of it. So I just drank my tea and ate my bread and butter, and listened to Miss Walker telling the company all about America.

It was very interesting to listen; and, no matter what curious questions they asked her, she had always something still more curious to give in answer. America must be a wonderful place, indeed, with the lynchings, and the billionaires, and the divorces, and the buffaloes that roam all around Yosemite Park or Central Park, I don't just remember which one she said—anyway, it is just near New York, where she lives—and they are very dangerous, and apt to gore you when you go out shopping.

"You hear that, Octave?" cried Madame Boussard. "*Mon Dieu*, let me hear no more of your schemes to hunt big game in America!"

So then Octave naturally hurried to change the subject, and asked if it was really true what one hears of the women in America, and how different they are from the French.

"Yes, indeed," answered Miss Walker, "cold and hard as glass, no nonsense for *us!*" Then she went on and told us how it was quite true, the American women have no hearts or souls, just brains and ambition, so that they never care for anyone but themselves. And the men, it seems, have to obey them, and make heaps of money for their wives to come and live in France—and everything like that, things that everybody knows, to be sure! But it was so interesting to hear her tell about it, and Octave sat and listened, and held her cup of tea, as though he had never heard any-

one talk about things before in all his life.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Madame Rondolé. "But I pity the man who marries one of these frozen goddesses of yours, mademoiselle. For, above all women, I honor the loving wife." And she drew up her pretty little red mouth and smiled at poor old Monsieur Rondolé, who sat coughing and stirring his tea, under his ginger-colored head of hair.

Monsieur de Castaignac started to his feet. "There he comes!" he said. "The friend of whom I told you, for whom I am waiting now. Will these ladies give me gracious permission to present him?"

Madame Boussard looked important. "The Marquis of Saint-Yriac? As Monsieur Poizelle is not yet returned, I think we might venture."

"But certainly, my cabbage!" cried her husband. "To be sure, one does not have the chance to meet a marquis every day!"

Monsieur de Castaignac dashed off. Octave kept looking at Miss Walker.

"You also, mademoiselle," he said, in a troubled sort of way—"you also, like the other American women, you make a mock of love?"

"No, monsieur." And he brightened, but she laughed and went on: "How can I, when I refuse to believe that such a thing exists in the world?"

Octave's jaw dropped, and he stared and sighed, "Ah, mademoiselle!" As for Madame Rondolé, she gave the sweetest little laugh, and opened her mouth to say something—and just then up came Monsieur de Castaignac with his friend. "Mesdames, with your gracious permission I present to you my brother officer, Monsieur de Saint-Yriac."

Everybody bowed. As for me, it was lucky that nobody noticed me, as I sat there modestly in my whity-brown dress and black veil. I closed my eyes for a

moment, and clutched my cup of tea. Then I looked.

I was not dreaming any more, I was sure of that. But, just the same, there before me, seating himself in the vacant chair between Miss Walker and Madame Rondolé, broad awake, smiling with white teeth that glistened against his sunburn; just the same, even to his brown clothes and his high russet leather cavalry boots —there he was; yes, beyond all question or doubt of dreaming, there he was!

I bent my head low over my teacup, but, all the same, I felt myself turn hot and tremble all over. It seemed to me that he would only need to see me, to know all about it at once—just who I was, just what I had done. I saw Madame Boussard looking at me with an encouraging smile.

"Look there at the innocent young creature!" she whispered to her husband. Ah, if she knew! What would she say of me then?

But after a moment or two, as they were all talking together and laughing and drinking tea, I ventured just to raise my eyes for a glance. Yes, he was just the same; even now that he was laughing at Miss Walker's stories about America, it seemed to me that I could still see it in his face—something that was sad and yet proud, too. But his eyes, now that they were open, were so clear, so kind, so keen! Suddenly they met mine. I felt now that my last moment had come, and I wondered if anybody would ever speak to me again.

"Your cup, mademoiselle," he said, politely, and sprang forward. "Allow me to relieve you of it." He took it from my hand, laid it on the table, and went on talking with Madame Boussard and Miss Walker.

I took a long breath. How stupid I had been! Of course, when he had seen me before, his eyes had been fast shut; so how could he possibly recognize me

now? After all, in the story Alain Chartier had never, never known!

So I took a long breath, and sat up straight and began to listen to the conversation. I was still shaking, and the palms of my hands were hot.

"Now, monsieur, you can tell me, I am sure," cried Miss Walker to the Marquis, "what I have been trying to find out ever since I arrived in Saint-Yriac this morning—where does one find the leading ghosts, the principal fairies, of this place? I can find so little in Baedeker."

"Ah, mademoiselle," responded the Marquis, "you are fortunate, indeed, in applying to me. From the earliest times my family has been on intimate terms with the elves of Normandy, the pixies and the fays. And as for ghosts, why, I myself——" He stopped and hesitated. Everybody screamed at him:

"Ghosts? Oh, tell us, tell us!"

The Marquis laughed. "Just a rather absurd little adventure that I had the other day," he said; "nothing worth telling, upon my soul!"

"Oh, but please—please!"

"This is the affair, quite simply, madame! In the first place, there is an old servant of mine, a strange old woman, full of tales of the past and prophecies for the future, but devoted to my family and by consequence to me. In the second place——"

"Yes, monsieur; the second place?"

"There is an old garden, which, the story runs, was built by one of my ancestors for"—he hesitated and glanced around the circle—"for a beautiful woman of the people, who, they say, drowned herself there in the fountain, after the Revolution had driven her lover away from France. So, of course, as is generally admitted, her ghost walks there in the garden still. And, according to Mother Jobard, there is a faint old

rumor, a half-forgotten song, which declares that she will some day appear again in the flesh, and bring back prosperity to Saint-Yriac."

"Oh, how lovely, how charming!" cried Miss Walker, clapping her hands.

"Nothing remarkable, mademoiselle—merely an example of the old tales and traditions which float and cling everywhere in the minds of these peasants of Normandy."

"But the ghost?" laughed Madame Rondolé.

"I am coming to that, madame. This garden of which I tell you is now no longer mine—it has passed into the possession of your good host, Monsieur Poizelle." He smiled so pleasantly, the Marquis, as he said this; but ah! I knew by his eyes how he must be feeling about it. "Now, this is a keen grief to my faithful old servant, Mother Jobard. So she keeps it in order, just as she used to in the old days; and this past month,

whenever I have been at home, she has insisted that I should go to the garden every day. 'It is yours,' she says, 'and they grow lonely, the poor ghosts, waiting so long for your beloved footfall!'"

Ah! what was it that Mother Jobard had said to me? "The garden is yours, mademoiselle!" And now, what did she mean, what was she intending, this strange old woman, when she had said to her master, too, "The garden is yours"?

Miss Walker looked so sad, and leaned forward so sweetly. "Ah, the poor old thing!" she said, softly. "And did the ghosts welcome you, monsieur?"

"Mademoiselle, here is the strange part of the story—they made me royally, most substantially welcome! The other morning I came in very tired from my work—for I am making the most of this present furlough, you understand, by taking observations and making

schemes for fortifications along this coast. Mother Jobard had not yet prepared my second breakfast, so she begged me, while I was waiting, to go down to the garden. 'And when monseigneur returns, all shall be in readiness,' she said. So, as I like to please the good old soul, I took a book and climbed the fence and went down to the garden."

"Now," breathed Madame Rondolé, "we come to the ghosts!"

"Precisely, madame! You see, in the warm air I soon grew drowsy over my book. So I left it by the fountain, and went to the old summer-house which still stands there, and stretched myself out for a nap. I slept, I believe, longer than I had intended. But the dreams that came to me, *mon Dieu*, they were charming!"

"Ghosts?" asked Miss Walker.

"Mademoiselle, do not laugh. I assure you, this is very serious."

I sat stiff, all my fears brought back again. Oh, the stupid creatures,

why did they go on with their questions?

"The dreams, tell us of them, monsieur!" implored Madame Rondolé. I wanted to shake her!

It seemed to me that he blushed, that young marquis, as I glanced at him from under my lashes. Then he laughed in a composed sort of way.

"See the absurdity, madame! But my dream was so real, I feel almost guilty of bad faith in telling it. For it seemed to me that as I lay there asleep a lady came and stood by me—a lady of the most exquisite beauty, such as tradition describes her for whom the garden was built."

"The ghost?"

"Yes, the little ghost, beyond a doubt. She stood and looked down at me, and then, bending over, she kissed me—yes, kissed me sweetly, here upon my cheek!"

My heart had stopped beating, my hands were cold. "Ah, the good fortune!" cried Octave.

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"Beyond a doubt. But, you see, here is the difficulty—the next moment, I woke up."

"Ah, I know!" cried Octave, again. "The English say: '*I thought it was a kiss, but it was just an idle dream!*'"

The Marquis bowed. "Precisely. And yet not altogether idle. For when I looked around me, what do you suppose I found the ghost had left for me?"

"A withered harebell?" responded Madame Rondolé.

"Or, perhaps," suggested Miss Walker, "a wreath of mist!"

"Neither, mesdames; a tart—a strawberry tart, large and delicious, with pastry that crumbled beneath the touch and strawberries that melted in the mouth!"

"You ate it?" cried Miss Walker. "The tart of a ghost, baked no one knows by what fires?"

The Marquis grinned, so pleased and happy that my blood began to melt

again, and I was glad, so glad, that I had thought to leave it for him.

"Did I eat it, mademoiselle? I, all starving as I was, and the tart—ah, I declare to you, not Heaven itself could ever efface the memory of that juiciness and sweetness!"

"I should envy you," observed Miss Walker, "if it were not that we have such delicious tarts at Monsieur Poizelle's, that no ghost could do better!" And she smiled at me. Madame Rondolé's brown eyes, so keen under their softness, glanced around from one of us to the other. I held my face down under my black veil. Oh, *mon Dieu*, I had meant it only in joke—and now, who could tell what might come of it?

"And then, what happened next?" asked Miss Walker.

"Nothing, mademoiselle. Stay, there was one thing more! When I had finished the tart, I turned to look for my book before going home. It was gone.

And in its place the ghost had left—what do you suppose?"

I gripped my chair and trembled—and yet, at the same time, I had to bite my cheeks from the inside, to keep from laughing. I knew, you see, what it was that he found!

"A skull and a couple of thigh-bones?" ventured Octave.

"No, monsieur, a tureen—a soup-tureen of plain white china, with a gold and crimson band!"

Everybody screamed with laughter. "And a kiss under the cover?" inquired Octave.

"Nothing, monsieur. Except that the handle was slightly sticky, there was nothing to distinguish it from any other tureen. So I let it lie, and returned home."

"You left it behind—the love-token of your little phantom? Bah! she will haunt you."

"No, madame. For that same night it appeared upon my buffet. Mother

Jobard, my old servant, found that it did excellently to hold the milk of her new cow. So there, you see——"

All of a sudden I heard a low, growling sort of noise behind me. I turned, and there were auntie and papa—papa, purple in the face and glaring, glaring straight at the Marquis!

Octave jumped up and presented them to papa, first Monsieur de Castaignac and then the Marquis. "I have already the honor of knowing monsieur the Marquis," says papa.

The Marquis bowed very gravely. "I will intrude on you no longer, mesdames," he said. "I have to thank you for your kind hospitality, and your gracious attention to my stupid little story. Adieu, mesdames!" And off he went, and Monsieur de Castaignac with him.

Papa shook his fist at their backs. "I'll show him how much Poizelle cares for him and his nobility," he growled.

"In the old days the Marquis could enter our homes by force; if the Marquis of to-day tries to enter, we show him the door!" And he drank down the cups of cold tea that Madame Boussard poured out for him.

Suddenly it struck me, what had puzzled me so before. The Marquis of long ago—the Marquis of to-day—the same Marquis, but different men. Son and father and grandfather—the Marquis never dies, of course! I had never thought of that. If I had, I might have known who it was in the garden that day. And then, of course, I would never have—— But, ah! it is too late to think of that now!

"And what was he saying to you, this fine dandy of a marquis?" papa exploded, suddenly.

"Oh, such an interesting story!" cried Miss Walker. "All about——"

Ah, now it was going to fall on me at last, for when auntie hears about the tart,

and papa about the red and gold soup-tureen—— My hands and feet turned cold.

"My dear Miss Walker," interrupted Madame Boussard, "pardon the interruption—but do you not think it time now, Monsieur Poizelle, to return to our automobiles? The wind blows cold from the Channel. And as for this little daughter of yours—for this past half hour I have been watching her; and between the damp air and the hot sun, here she is as white as the ghost she has been hearing of."

She is nice, I think, Madame Boussard! So off we all went in our automobiles again. About half-way home we passed the Marquis, galloping along on his brown cavalry horse; he smiled and saluted us, quite calm and pleasant.

As we swept down the Saint-Yriac road on the way to Villa Clematis, I looked up at the chateau lying all lit with the sunset, so far above us. There on

the peak of the rock, her hand shielding her eyes against the sun, and the wind blowing her blue woollen apron out like a flag, stood Mother Jobard, searching down the high-road for her master to come home.

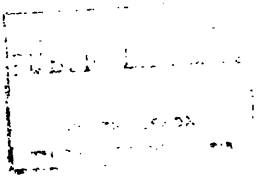
"Look, then, at ancient France!" cried Octave, pointing upward as we flew along.

"The strange old creature," said Miss Walker, softly. "What would you not give, monsieur, to know what is in her mind!"

And I, also, when I remembered what I had heard this afternoon—what she had said to her master, what she had said to me—contradicting herself all so crazy and so strange—I also thought I would give a good deal to know what was in her mind, the old Mother Jobard!



"Look, then, at ancient France!"



VIII.

THE thing that worries me most of all is that soup-tureen. I dream of it at night, dancing about on ladles for legs, and banging its cover at me. Then I wake up and think . . . suppose Miss Walker should finish that story to papa, some day! and suppose Victor should happen to mention to papa that the tureen is gone . . . how long would it take everybody to put two and two together, and know what it meant, that dream of the Marquis's?

Victor is getting very irritated about it; he keeps sending up messages from downstairs, through Johanne, begging mademoiselle to come and see for

herself that the kitchen floor is nothing but an omelet, till he has his tureen to keep his eggs in once more!

So I made up my mind that the first chance I got I would run up to the garden and try and find Mother Jobard, and see if she wouldn't be so kind, and bring back my tureen to me.

It was not so easy, though, finding a chance! For now that Miss Walker had come, she always walked with me in the mornings, she and Octave, and papa and Monsieur Boussard. And in the afternoons it was always the automobiles and the Golf Club—very gay and very English, upon my word! And the weather is so fine and bright, and Victor makes us such splendid things to eat! But I wish, whenever the strawberry tarts come on, that I didn't feel Madame Rondolé's big brown eyes fixed on me, with the faintest little smile.

She is a strange woman, I think; because the sweeter she is to you, the

more you feel somehow that she doesn't like you at all. Now, she calls Miss Walker "dear angel," and "beautiful little American," and yet when the beautiful little American's back is turned I have seen Madame Rondolé look at her as though she would like to dig a hat-pin into her.

The others all seem to like Miss Walker, though, especially Octave. When we are out automobiling now, Octave is turned around about three-quarters of the time, talking with us in the tonneau—that is, talking with Miss Walker, trying to make jokes with her in English, and asking questions about those strange, cold-hearted women of America. Madame Rondolé, sitting by him on the front seat, smiles very sweetly and begs him not to dash us to pieces over the cliffs . . . but sometimes when she glances around, her eyes look at Miss Walker as hard and cold as glass. And then she smiles and calls her "*belle Américaine!*"

Miss Walker, on her side, I don't think that she is very fond of Madame Rondolé; and I think that that is the reason that yesterday, when we were all asked to the Casino at Dieppe to take *five-o'clock* with some chic friends of Madame Rondolé, that Miss Walker declared she had a headache and begged to be allowed to stay at home.

Papa said that it would only be polite for me to stay with her; as though I were not glad enough of the chance to escape a stupid *five-o'clock*, where I sit and listen to jokes that I cannot understand, and nobody takes any notice of me!

So after everybody had said how sorry they were not to have us come too, I went upstairs with Miss Walker and bathed her head with Water of Night-blooming Cereus (Perfumery Poizelle!). Pretty soon we heard the touf-touf of the automobiles starting off. First Octave, looking rather sulky, I thought, and

Madame Rondolé in a most beautiful new hat, and her pretty little red mouth smiling and chattering as though she were quite happy. Then after they had started, the others came out. There was some delay about papa's automobile, but finally they all got off too—papa, auntie, the Boussards and old Monsieur Rondolé. He is very good-natured and kind to his wife, I think, that old man!

A few moments after the automobiles had vanished, Miss Walker jumped up and declared that her head was nearly well. I had cured it splendidly, she said. She thanked me so sweetly, and said I was the only French girl she had known, and if they were all like me she would like to know a thousand. Then she said that we had mademoiselle'd each other long enough, and now I must call her Hazel and she would call me Joujou if I didn't mind—so kind and pleasant of her! She tried to teach me to pronounce her name in the real American fashion,—

"*Azelle . . . Hazelle!*" Then I taught her to say Joujou, and she said it so funnily. Then we burst out laughing at each other, and then we were better friends than ever!

She looked so pretty, in her pale blue crêpe *négligé* and her light brown hair loose and falling over her shoulders, that I couldn't help telling her so. "Please don't think me rude!" I said, "for mentioning it. And your clothes, too —they are lovely, I think. When I am married, I intend to have just the same!"

Miss Walker laughed. "Ah!" she cried, "it's lucky for me, isn't it, that I don't have to wait as long as that." Then she paused and looked at me. "I'll tell you what we'll do this afternoon!" she said. "Let's play that you are an American girl, or a married lady, or something—and dress ourselves as we should be, in some of these new Paris frocks of mine!"

I was a little bit frightened at the idea; but before I had time to make any objections, Miss Walker was opening trunks and slamming about trays, and pulling out beautiful dresses and ribbons and lingerie . . . and when once I had seen them, there was no use trying to refuse any more.

"First I'll do your hair decently," said Hazel, "you don't mind, do you, honey? Such lovely hair, and such a *crime*, the way you wear it!" She let it out loose and ran the comb through it so softly, without pulling a single hair. "Such a beautiful wave, when you let it out loose! . . . Here, now I'll do it up high, you don't mind? in a pompadour. Very improper, I suppose—but there's lots of time to get it down again and clubbed with that black ribbon, before everybody comes home! . . . Now I'll do my own hair. . . . And now for the ruffly petticoats!"

Such lovely lace things as we put on—lawn chemises run with blue ribbons, and skirts with yards and yards of lace ruffles around the bottom. Hazel is so much taller than I, that the lace dragged and flopped all around my feet. "But no matter!" she said, "it will all come out in the wash, honey! And the dress, too—drag them around all you can. Here, let me arrange the fichu, and pin the sash up tighter, and it fits you as though it had been made for you. . . . There! Now you are finished. And while I am finishing myself, you can take a look in the mirror!"

There was no use talking, I did look different in that beautiful soft white muslin, all lace and embroidery and showers of little tucks . . . all falling around me like a thin mist, and my neck and arms showing through, and the blue ribbon of my chemise . . . just like Madame Rondolé. Then my hair, all yellow and waving . . . yes, I

did look different from little every-day Joujou!

"Upon my word," said Miss Walker, softly, "you are beautiful. . . . No, beautiful isn't the word! So pale and delicate and shining—you look like nothing human . . . one of these elves of old Normandy, or perhaps that little phantom that we heard of the other day! . . . Do you mind if I touch you, please, and make sure that you are real?"

Somehow, I wished that she hadn't mentioned it, that story that we heard the other day! Because that made me think of what I am ashamed of, and trying to forget. . . . But still one can't be sad or silent very long, when Hazel is by! And just looking at her, I had to smile for pleasure. I had never seen her before, you understand, in anything but duck tailor-mades, or the plain organdies that she puts on for dinner every evening. And now, in her lace flounces and

frilly white lawn, transparent over the shoulders and cut away to show her beautiful throat, white as milk below the brown line of tan that ran around it—she looked so rosy, so blooming, so lovely that I felt quite badly that there was no one there to see her, but just me!

"I feel ridiculous, somehow, in anything but a short skirt!" said Hazel, giving her lace train a little kick,—"and really, as you see, I buy these clothes only as a matter of form. So trail that dress around all you can—draggle it, ruin it! And you'll get one of the useless things out of my way, at any rate!"

When we were dressed, there was not much to do, to be sure. So we went downstairs to walk about the place a little, and pretend, as Hazel said, that we were married ladies. We went out on the piazza, walking slowly and laughing to each other, with our heads high and our skirts frou-frouing around us—and there sitting in the hammock, reading

the *London Times* very quietly—whom should we see but Octave!

"Ah, monsieur!" cried Hazel, with a jump.

He started to his feet and bowed elegantly. "Forgive me, mesdemoiselles, that I intrude upon your solitude! But you see, I had gone only a few moments on my road to Dieppe, when my motor broke down—perfectly obstinate! And before the chauffeur and I had discovered what was the matter, along came the other machine—and as they thought Madame Rondolé should take no risks about getting to Dieppe in time, they took her along with them. I was to follow as soon as I could."

"But you didn't!" cried Hazel laughing. Octave laughed also, a little consciously.

"Do not blame me, mademoiselle! We found that the valve of the carburetter was broken—it will take some time to mend. So I left my chauffeur and

walked back here to Villa Clematis. You will forgive me, mademoiselle, if I admit I do not grieve very deeply for the accident?"

Hazel laughed again, and it seemed to me that she turned just a shade pinker as he looked at her.

"We have been dressing up!" she said, "though Joujou tells me, it is quite against the rules of the game for her to wear lace ruffles or let her hair curl, until she's a married lady!"

I felt a little uncomfortable when she said that, and I saw Octave biting his lip as though he were a little troubled, too, about something. Of course, as nothing is yet really arranged, Hazel can have no idea that Octave and I are to be married; or else of course she wouldn't talk that way before us!

Octave bowed again. "Mademoiselle Joujou is charming!" he said, "and you also, miss! But when you talk of dressing up—I am sure, *you* do not have to

wait till you are married, before you wear lace and jewels, and do your hair as you please!"

"I should hope not, indeed!" cried Hazel. "Would you expect me to wear plain hems and a plain bun, until I die?"

"Miss, you are joking! Is it possible then, you intend never to marry?"

"Monsieur, have I not told you my opinions on the subject? No nonsense of the kind for *me!*"

So they went on disputing as usual about marriage, and cold hearts, and Frenchmen, and unfeeling American women. Very interesting, it all was! and Hazel kept turning around every minute and asking my opinion about things. It seemed so useless, though, for me to be sitting there listening, when they could get on perfectly well without me . . . and when there was something I wanted so much to do for myself!

The soup-tureen! This was such a splendid chance to slip up to my garden and see if I could find old Mother Jobard! and I wriggled in my chair, more and more restless every minute.

So at last I got up. "You will pardon me, won't you," I said, "if I leave you, just a little while!"

"Don't be long, dear!" said Hazel. And I dashed away.

First I went to my room, and found the volume of Alain Chartier, which I knew I ought to return. I caught just a glimpse of myself in the mirror as I passed, all white and misty like a spirit—I was almost frightened for a moment, till I remembered!

I tiptoed out very softly, so as not to disturb the conversation at the end of the piazza. Then I clutched my dress up around me, and my book under my arm, and I flew up the hill-side as fast as I could run, through the trees, over the moss and ferns . . . it was all so

quiet, and it smelled so sweet! that the distance did not seem very long to me, when at last I came to the top.

I was a little bit afraid; for how could I know, you see, what I was going to find there? . . . But I knew that I was doing what was right—to return the book that did not belong to me, and get back Victor's soup-tureen. . . . But when I walked down the little green mossy path, beside the old gray statues, somehow I forgot to be afraid any more, I forgot to think even what I had come there for. . . . I was so happy, so happy! to be in my garden once more.

The pink and scarlet poppies were in full bloom, the bees and butterflies were humming and fluttering all around me; the sun shining down through the trees made golden splashes everywhere, and the air was warm and soft and full of the smell of flowers. All around me was the quiet old forest. The world seemed a hundred miles, a hundred years, away!

But, all the same, the first thing I did was to look in at the door of the summer-house. It was empty, except for a few solemn crickets that jumped around on the stone floor. Nobody sleeping there to-day! I was glad of that . . . yes, really glad, not disappointed at all. Yes, I was as glad as I could be, that there was no Alain Chartier there to-day!

Then I looked about for Mother Jobard, who might be somewhere about, picking up twigs or weeding the garden. It was plain, from the almost tidy look of the place, that she had been there not very long ago. But now, she was nowhere to be seen. I searched about, though I was so afraid of tearing my lace on the thorns of the hedge-row. I even called her name once or twice very softly. But not a soul replied.

So it was plain, the only thing for me to do was to put back the book on the fountain where I had found it, and trust

to the honor of the Marquis to bring back the tureen.

I laid it down, the old black leather book, that had already put so many ideas into my head, and had done so much mischief for me! But, all the same, I felt sad to give it up, and leave it behind forever. There was still so much in it that I had not read! . . . So I said to myself, "Just one moment more, one page more, before I go away!"

I sat down by the fountain, with my white skirts spread out all around me so as not to crush them, and my hair loosened a little by my climb and beginning to fall about my face in the most annoying way, so that I had to put it back with my hand as I read. But pretty soon I forgot my hair, I forgot my dress, I forgot everything! The poetry was so sweet, and so sad, and everybody that it told of was dead so long ago. . . .

So I sat by the fountain and read. . . . I knew that I ought to go home to Hazel

and Octave, but still I sat there and read, just a moment more. . . .

Suddenly I heard a little step behind me . . . just the merest little echo of a step. . . .

Mother Jobard, at last! I jumped up and turned quickly, one hand pushing back my hair and my soft white ruffles dragging and twisting in the grass about my feet; I turned and looked straight into the eyes of the Marquis!

He was standing just a little way from me, in the path coming down from the pavilion; just the same as before, except that the brown suit had been changed for gray, and he carried a riding-whip in his hand. I noticed, too, that his eyes were blue, and they were looking straight at me.

Somehow I had never thought of finding him broad awake here, with his eyes wide open! When I had thought of him in the garden, it was always as lying down in the summer-house, fast asleep

. . . and here he stood staring straight at me, not saying a single word! And I stared back at him, not daring even to breathe.

Suddenly he lifted his hand, as though he were going to make the sign of the cross. . . . "Who are you, please?" he said, just like that—quick and short and a little bit troubled.

I began to laugh—I couldn't help it! It was funny to find that he was frightened, too, more frightened even than I! So as it was silly to pretend or to be afraid any more, I just said:

"I am not a ghost. I am just Joujou Poizelle!"

When I laughed he laughed too, and I noticed again how white his teeth were against his tan; and his eyes, so pleasant, so honest! For a moment I hardly felt afraid any more.

Then he said:

"Thank you! You see, I have been brought up from childhood on the

legends of this place. And when I came upon you just now, springing up so white and silent beside the fountain—well, you can hardly blame me for feeling a little bit startled!"

I said, "No, indeed!" And then I stood there with my hand still pushing back my hair, looking down at the white muslin that trailed on the grass all around me—quite silent, like a fool. The Marquis didn't say anything, either, but I could feel him looking at me. . . . It seemed funny, he did not seem to know what to say, either. . . . A big, fat, yellow bee came blundering along and zoumzoumed about my head. I screamed a little and dodged, because I am afraid of them. The Marquis drove it away with his riding-whip.

I said, "Thank you, monsieur!"

He said, "It is nothing, mademoiselle."

Then we both stood there again without saying a word. Finally the Marquis said:

"I must make my excuses to you, mademoiselle, and to monsieur your father, for intruding thus upon your property."

I said, "It is nothing, monsieur!"

Finally the Marquis said: "I think, mademoiselle, though I did not recognize you at first, that I had the pleasure of meeting you at the Golf Club the other day."

"Yes, monsieur," I answered; and then, because it seemed only polite, I made my reverence that they taught us at the convent. The Marquis bowed, very solemnly. So that was all as it should be. But oh! in picking up my skirts, I dropped the book which I had held tight clasped under my arm until then. It fell tumbling on the grass, where the Marquis picked it up and handed it back to me.

"Your book, mademoiselle!" he said, and that was all. But in his eye as it fell upon the old black volume there was

the least little start of surprise, the faintest little flicker of a laugh. . . . He knew, now, and I knew that he knew!

So all at once, I saw how silly it was for me to pretend any more—especially if I wanted that soup-tureen! As for that dream of his . . . of course, it was nothing but a dream . . . and I would not think of that any more.

So I looked at him and said, "Not my book, monsieur, but yours." And I handed it back to him.

He took it very gravely and politely. "Mademoiselle, this is kind of you!" I was so glad, somehow, that he didn't laugh! And his eyes looked at me so kind and pleasant that I thought I might as well say outright what I had come for, and get it off my mind. So I said:

"And now, monsieur, may I have my soup-tureen?"

Again, he did not laugh. No, he tried to start as though he were surprised, and

he looked at me, very interested and serious. "Your tureen, mademoiselle? So it belonged to you, the soup-tureen that was left here by accident the other day?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Very well, as soon as I return home I will send my servant, the old Mother Jobard, to carry it immediately to the Villa Clematis."

"Oh, no!" I cried, "please don't do that!"

For if papa should see her bringing it, and should ask how she came by it . . . or if anyone should see it, that heard that story the other day . . . what might they not think? As for the Marquis, now that I had met him I was not afraid of him any more . . . but the others, who could never understand!

"No, monsieur," I cried, "you must bring it here, to me!"

Then when I had said it, I realized how bold and how strange I must seem . . . just like asking to see him

again. I felt myself turning crimson.

"Yes, mademoiselle," said he, quite calmly, "of course that would be the best. Such delicate china cannot, of course, be risked in other hands."

The old soup-tureen! I looked up to see if he were laughing at me—but, no, quite calm and serious. And suddenly as I met his eyes, they looked quite different from any eyes that I had ever seen before in the whole world. I don't know what it was; they were looking at me, straight through me, it seemed, as though they could see right into my soul. . . . And yet, nothing to make me feel uncomfortable; whatever he was thinking of me, I felt sure, they were pleasant thoughts! And though we stood there again without saying a word . . . and stood there, and stood there . . . somehow I didn't feel foolish, like the last time, or confused or afraid. At last I looked up; he was still looking at me, and our eyes met.

So he laughed, and I laughed too.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "is it permitted to me to thank you?"

I trembled. "For what, monsieur?"

"For the kind charity of one day last week, for which I am sure I am indebted to no kindness but yours. The tart, mademoiselle!"

I looked at him carefully. No, there was not the faintest hint in his voice, the least meaning in his eyes, that he was thinking of anything beside the tart. . .

So I said:

"I am very glad, monsieur, that you were pleased."

"Pleased, mademoiselle? It was the gift of Heaven to a starving man. Those strawberries . . . *mon Dieu*, shall I ever forget their flavor!"

It seemed so nice, somehow, to have him thank me that way, and to think that he was pleased about it all. I began to feel as though I had known him a long time, and his eyes, as they looked at

me, seemed the friendliest things that I had ever seen in the world. . . .

Then, all of a sudden, I remembered that it was growing late. The trees were all shadowy around us, and there was a damp, dewy feeling in the air. I gathered my skirts about me; they were limp and stained green with grass along the edge, and my hair had all curled into untidy little rings over my face. Somehow, I felt shy again, as I saw him looking at me.

"I must go now," I said, "it is time to go home."

"You will come back for the tureen?" he asked.

"I don't know. . . . Yes, yes, of course!"

"When shall I bring it to you, mademoiselle?"

"I don't know . . . it's so hard to tell . . . when I can get away. . . ."

"To-morrow, perhaps?"

"Yes, perhaps to-morrow!"

I held out my hand to him; he took it in his own, then bowed over it and kissed it.

Nobody ever did that to me before; and yet it pleased me, somehow, that he should kiss my hand.

The strange thing is, that even after he had gone, and I was at home again, that kiss seemed to stay there. Yes, that night when I was going to sleep . . . next morning when I woke up . . . I still felt his lips there upon the back of my hand, soft and warm, and the clasp of his fingers over mine.

I could not go back to the garden after all, for Madame Boussard kept me by her all day, and talked to me of Octave. As for Octave, he talked to Hazel, while Madame Rondolé talked to him.

While I . . . I wondered if he was waiting for me there among the flowers, with the soup-tureen—my new friend with the kind eyes; the wicked Marquis of Saint-Yriac, that it was my duty as a Poizelle to hate and fear.

IX.

I CAN'T imagine how I ever looked forward to their coming, these guests of ours, or thought them amusing when they had come.

To be sure, Hazel is nice. She is always nice, and I don't think that anyone could ever be tired of Hazel.

But Madame Boussard—oh, how wearisome she is, with her talk of Octave, and her charities, and Octave again—from breakfast-time till after dinner! And Monsieur Boussard, with his talk about business, which I cannot understand, and old Monsieur Rondolé, with his silly jokes. I am tired, tired of all of them! As for Madame Rondolé,



Old Monsieur Rondolé with his silly jokes.

she is a cat, her hair is so silky and she purrs at you so sweetly; but all the time, you are sure that she is just looking for a chance to scratch.

As for Octave, he is very pleasant, and I certainly cannot be bored with him, because except for good-morning and good-evening, he never speaks a word to me. No, he doesn't bother me a bit . . . and yet . . . when I look at him and think that I shall have to marry him, some day . . . somehow I grow cold all over.

Yes, every day is stupider than the last, here at the Villa Clematis, till sometimes I grow quite wild. Then I tell myself how wicked and ungrateful I am, and I try to sit up and smile and listen to the conversation. But Madame Rondolé makes jokes under her breath—jokes that I cannot understand; and Octave talks about the Jockey Club and argues with Hazel about the hearts of American women; and papa talks of Perfumery

Poizelle, and the wicked Marquis of Saint-Yriac, and swears he will be even with him yet. Poor papa, he is quite wild, because he lost his action for trespass, which he brought against the Marquis. So he declares that the courts of France are bought and sold, and that the Marquis is as great a villain as any of his ancestors.

I don't understand how papa can be so mistaken. Because when I saw the Marquis in the garden . . . when he kissed my hand . . . I could see quite plainly for myself that there was nothing wicked about him. And then when I remember what Monsieur de Castaignac said of him, that day at the Golf Club—Of course I don't care! There is really no reason that I should feel badly about it, one way or the other—but somehow, it hurts me to see papa so unfair to anybody. Yes, I hate to see him so mistaken, and so unjust!

But all the same, the talking goes on all the time . . . and I never get a moment to myself, to walk in the woods or do anything that I choose. And Victor keeps worrying me about the soup-tureen.

I think that Madame Rondolé knows that I am troubled about something. Because whenever we have strawberry tarts, she looks at me in a knowing sort of way, and yesterday when the soup came on, she looked at me and asked if there were any spirits in it—and then she laughed.

But there's one satisfaction, I can see quite plainly that she is not very pleased herself with the way that things are going. When Octave and Hazel make jokes and laugh together, I can see Madame Rondolé bite her lip, and then smile so sweetly that you know she is quite furious inside. And the other night, when those two were teasing each other and laughing, as usual, Madame Rondolé came over to the far end of the piazza where I was

sitting with Madame Boussard, hearing how Octave won the cup in the cricket-match last summer.

"Dear Madame Boussard," said she, "I am sure at last that you will agree with me!"

Madame Boussard nodded solemnly. "And you propose?" she said.

"To turn the pursuit. My dear friend, what do you think of bringing Monsieur de Castaignac over to Saint-Yriac?"

Madame Boussard brightened. "An excellent plan!" she replied.

So the next day, Monsieur de Castaignac made his appearance at Villa Clematis. He is very handsome—almost too handsome, for a man, it seems to me. From the first moment he came to Villa Clematis, he has sat by Miss Walker at table and followed her about all day, and made the soft eyes at her all the time, so beautifully that I sometimes wonder that she can laugh at him as she

always does. As for Octave, he never gets a chance to speak to her, and he looks so cross! Madame Rondolé is the only one that looks happy; and she smiles all the time in that demure little way of hers, as though everything were going exactly as she pleased.

Monsieur de Castaignac never takes any notice of me, of course. But all the same, I am as glad as Madame Rondolé that he is here; for they are just four, a nice number, without me—and Monsieur de Castaignac is teaching them to play bridge. They are quite wild about it. We have stopped going to the Golf Club, and we only go out for an hour or so every afternoon in the automobiles. That is, the older ones go, of course, and parade solemnly over the countryside; while Madame Rondolé and Hazel, Octave and Monsieur de Castaignac, sit around the little table on the piazza with their cards in their hands, and such important frowns on their foreheads.

But oh, I am so much obliged to him, this Monsieur de Castaignac! For now I am free to come and go as I please. For the two hours before dinner, they are all four so busy that no one notices whether I am there or not; so this afternoon, as they sat there fussing over trumps, it seemed to me that nobody could think me rude if I just slipped away and took a little walk in the woods.

The dear forest! with its quiet shadows and the sweet damp smell of the earth coming up all about me—What did it hold for me? . . . Should I find anyone waiting for me there in the garden? For a moment, I was almost afraid; and as I hurried up between the trees, I planned to myself what I would say—a nice dignified speech, just like Sister Angélique.

But when I came to the garden, I found no one there; nobody, that is, but the old Mother Jobard, with a queer

old rusty sickle in her hand, cutting grass beside the fountain. She jumped up when she saw me, and smiled at me in a pleased sort of way, with her bright old eyes glittering at me so strangely under her blue woollen kerchief. "Mademoiselle will pardon my boldness, that she finds me again in her garden?" she said, and courtesied so low that she almost vanished among the poppies.

My garden! So the garden belonged to me again, did it? However, I was not going to bother about that. So I just explained to her what I had come for, and asked her please to go and bring me back my soup-tureen, as quickly as she could.

She bowed again. "All shall be as mademoiselle desires!" she replied, and trotted off, dark and silent under the horse-chestnut trees. I sat down and waited for her to come back. After all, they hadn't been wanted, my fine long dignified speeches; for of course, the

Marquis would never come here any more, now that he had found out he didn't have the garden to himself. Had he come back, that day that I had promised to come, too? Of course not! It was ridiculous to think that he would want to see me again . . . or for the matter of that, that I should want to see him, the Marquis of Saint-Yriac—I, Joujou Poizelle!

So I began to think, in my mind, what I should say if I ever saw him again—after I am married, of course, when I am free to look straight at people and say just what comes into my head. The conversation came to me as I sat there, all quite clear and distinct. I was very stately and dignified—rather sharp, indeed; and though the Marquis's replies were rather far-away, still it was plain that he was very much impressed, and respected me very much indeed.

It took her a long time to climb the fence, and get the tureen, and come back

again, that old woman! So the conversation went on, inside my head; it was strange, I tried to be sharp and clever, but his eyes as they looked at me were so kind . . . and it seemed to me that he took my hand in his again, and kissed it. . . .

Ah, that was silly! I bit my finger in a rage at myself—sitting there all alone, making believe like a baby. So to drive away those foolish thoughts, I just shut my eyes up tight and began to count,—one, two, three, and so on. One hundred, two hundred . . . why did she not return, the old Mother Jobard? Three hundred, four hundred . . . I had always found it easy enough, till now, to forget what I wanted to forget. . . . So I shut my eyes tighter, and counted on.

I had almost finished a thousand, when just behind me I heard a step and the familiar old clank of heavy china. "Here you are at last!" I said quite

crossly, as I opened my eyes and whirled around.

But this time it wasn't Mother Jobard; it was the Marquis himself standing there smiling at me, with his hat in one hand and the soup-tureen in the other. It was very strange, but at the sight of him all the fine speeches went out of my head like smoke out of a chimney. However, I made my reverence. "Monsieur——" I said, and then not another word. I just stood there in my brown piqué dress, thinking of Hazel's beautiful muslin down there in my wardrobe at Villa Clematis. It seemed dreadful, somehow, after being taken for a spirit the other day, to have him find me now in the same spot again, looking like an ugly child!

However, he didn't seem to notice anything. "Mademoiselle," said he, "my old house-keeper, the Mother Jobard, has begged me to bring you this," and he held out the tureen to me.

I took it—glad enough I was to have it again, you may be sure!

"Thank you, monsieur," I said.

"You were not here the other day," he said, "when I brought it here for you."

"I was very sorry," I answered, "but I had to go out in the automobile." Ah, so he had come to the garden, after all! I was so glad, somehow, to think of it, that I couldn't help looking up and smiling at him. He smiled back at me. It is strange, that though his hair is so dark, his eyes are a light blue like Hazel's, and like hers they look straight at you as though they had no secrets behind them and didn't mean that you should have any, either.

"But it is kind of mademoiselle," he replied with a laugh, "to come to-day—and especially to appear in a form less alarming to my superstitious fears."

The old whity-brown dress! However, there was no use thinking of that

now. So I just said, "Yes, there's nothing about me to-day, to make anyone feel afraid."

He looked at me, quick and yet different. "I don't know——" he said, half under his breath. "I'm not so certain of that, after all." Again his eyes seemed to go through me. I turned away, and the tureen rattled unsteadily in my hand.

"Take care, mademoiselle," he cried, and snatched it from me as it slid to the ground. That was awkward of me, indeed! I stooped in a hurry to pick it up, and our heads came together with a knock. "Pardon, mademoiselle!" he said quite seriously, and then, "But, look, mademoiselle, there's something inside the tureen!"

To be sure, the cover had fallen off, and there inside the tureen lay a handful of green sprigs—crinkled pale green leaves with a tiny scarlet blossom. "Ah," I cried, "the pretty little flow-

ers!" He picked up a spray and gave it to me, and I took it in my hand and smelled it; the flowers were scentless, but there was a strange aromatic fragrance to the pale gray-green leaves. I looked up at the Marquis, who stood there, solemnly holding the soup-tureen. "Thank you!" I said.

He laughed again. "No, don't thank me! I regret to say I knew nothing of these flowers. No, I will tell you from whom they came—from the old Mother Jobard, who gave me this tureen just now to carry back to you."

He looked at me a little oddly. "She is a strange old woman," he continued; "one never knows what is in her mind. She is a devoted faithful old creature, indeed, but—— Mademoiselle! This is not right. Let me throw away those flowers!"

As he spoke he gathered them into his hand, then he began to laugh, and let them fall back again. "See, mademoi-

selle! She wished to make you feel requited, the poor old Mother Jobard."

I looked into the tureen, then I had to laugh, too. Among the flowers lay two long dark cakes, baked brown and scalloped around the edges. It looked so funny, and so familiar, to see cakes again in my old soup-tureen!

"To be sure," observed the Marquis, "they are not tarts! But we do our best, my poor old servant and I. These cakes are a specialty of this countryside, a mixture, I believe, of rye, syrup, and dried cherries, very dear to me when I was a boy, and still acceptable. Mademoiselle will honor me?" And with a grand gesture he motioned me to a seat by the fountain.

Sudden doubt rushed over me. Perhaps at that very moment, papa was telling Monsieur Boussard about the wrongs of our race, and the wicked seigneur, and the cow. . . . And down at the Villa Clematis, they were playing bridge out

on the piazza. It was not right for me to be here. I had done wrong to come at all . . . and oh, I must not stay!

"I must go home," I said softly. I meant to go—I wanted to go—but just the same I did not take a single step. It seemed to me as though something were holding me—something stronger than I, something new and sweet, yet touched with a quick mysterious pain. Just for a moment it held me, then it shot past me with a glance—like a glance from those bright fierce eyes of Mother Jobard. I was trembling, and my breath came quick, but I turned to go away.

"I will take the tureen now," I said, "and go home."

"Ah, mademoiselle, one moment!" It was strange, but he really seemed to want me to stay. I felt those keen blue eyes of his looking down at me as we stood there quite solemnly, with the tureen between us. This time we did not laugh. . . . The air was so still

that I could hear the surf murmuring on the shore, far down behind the trees and the cliffs of Saint-Yriac.

"Please stay, mademoiselle, only for a moment!"

"Very well, a little while, only a little while."

So we sat down on the edge of the fountain. I took one cake and he took the other, and we sat there nibbling the scallops, quite gravely, and talking of the Golf Club, and the forest, and the old gray statues, that stood all about us, watching us so quietly. . . . The food was not so nice, indeed, as at my last picnic. For the taste of the rye was bitter, and the dried cherries were tough and hard like bits of wood. But somehow, I thought very little of that. . . .

We sat there while the shadows lengthened about us, and as I listened to the Marquis's voice rising and falling, as I answered questions, and tried to laugh in the proper places . . . slowly it

came over me again, that feeling that I had had the first day in the garden when I sat here alone—I felt older, somehow, and peaceful, and happy, as though I had found my own place at last. Everything was familiar to me—everything belonged to me; not because papa had bought it, but because from the beginning it had been meant for me . . . the overgrown hedge of box, the weather-beaten statues, the crumbled carvings of the fountain, the Marquis himself sitting there beside me, with his tanned face and his quick deep laugh—he was a part of it all, this was not the first time that we had sat together beside the fountain! It was a wild, fleeting notion, but for the moment so real that I trembled again.

As I glanced up I caught the Marquis's eyes fixed on me again. "Pardon, mademoiselle," he said, and I almost thought that he flushed, "but I was trying to think, where have I seen your face before?"

"At the Golf Club?" I said, trying to be unconcerned.

"No . . . no . . . more than that . . . longer ago than that. I cannot explain it, but your face comes back to me . . . from childhood, perhaps. Just a fancy, of course. You have finished your cake already, mademoiselle?"

"Not quite," and I crunched the last bit between my teeth. *That* was no fancy, at all events—those coarse, bitter cakes. Is that all that he has to eat, this poor young man, in that dark old castle of his, high up on the rocks? How dreadful, to be poor! Then I remembered what Monsieur de Castaignac had told us, that day at the Golf Club, of why he had no money left in the world, this young Marquis of Saint-Yriac. And when I looked at him, it seemed to me that I could read it all in his face, under that kind grave smile of his—all the loneliness, and the sacrifice, and the long, grinding years.

Papa is very good, and very clever,—but surely, he is mistaken this time, when he says that the Marquis of Saint-Yriac is not a good man!

"Mademoiselle, you find it beautiful, this old garden?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Then you walk here often?—Yes, I am sure you do!"

"Yes . . . no . . . that is, as often as I have the chance to run away by myself!"

I laughed as I thought of Madame Boussard, and those long talks about Octave, and all the company sitting around making jokes and telling stories without taking any notice of me. The Marquis seemed to understand, for he laughed too.

"Yes, your time is well taken up, I can believe that, with all the guests at Villa Clematis! But in the chateau, you see, there is no one but myself—myself and the old Mother Jobard."

Ah, how dreadful to be all alone, with no company but that strange old woman, in that dark old castle with the narrow slits of windows, high up on that tall gray rock. The evenings, how lonely! and the nights, when one hears footsteps. . . .

"Thank you, mademoiselle, for the kind sympathy which I read in your face."

"Yes, indeed, it must be very wearisome, and a little sad, to be alone."

"Yes, as you say, wearisome and a little sad, even for a soldier, who of course has no right to complain of that. But still—mademoiselle, will you give me permission to walk sometimes here in the garden?"

He leaned a little toward me, as we sat together on the stone rim of the fountain. His eyes were still smiling, but there was no laughter in his voice. No, it sounded as though he were asking for something that he wanted very much—like my own voice, almost, when I beg

papa for some interesting books, or permission to visit one of the girls from the convent. But the idea of anyone speaking to me like that—to me, plain little Joujou, as though I were a person of importance whose permission made any difference about anything!

It seemed so strange, I hardly knew what to answer. He spoke again, quick and humble and almost eager.

"Mademoiselle, will you not allow me to return again here to your garden—some day?"

"Monsieur . . . you know . . . what permission have I to give? You know . . . my papa."

"Mademoiselle, I have the deepest respect for monsieur your papa. I regret deeply the unfortunate misunderstandings which have arisen between us. But you see the ancient prejudice is strong, and beside that, there has been some little difficulty about . . . ei . . . about the transfer of this

domain. Yes, it has all been unfortunate, even without this unpleasant business about the cow, which my notary in his zeal brought to the courts during my absence in Paris. . . . Of course, it can't be helped now—but, mademoiselle, at least you will forgive me, will you not?"

He smiled at me again as he looked down at me.

"Mademoiselle . . . you do not answer me? Then I am to understand, it would be very disagreeable to you, if by accident you should find me here again, some day?"

I started as though someone had waked me out of a dream. Then, as I did not wish to look childish or rude, I held up my head quite stately and dignified, like Madame Boussard, and said:

"Monsieur, it would give me a great deal of pleasure to see you again."

Then I jumped to my feet. In spite of all the old tales in Normandy, and

all the politeness in the world, it was growing late—I was sure of that.

"I must go now," I said, "give me my tureen again."

"And throw away the flowers? Mademoiselle will allow me to throw away the flowers?"

He looked at them as though he were half-troubled at the idea. But now that I had found out how much importance he gave to what I thought about anything, naturally I could not resist the chance to have my own way. So I said:

"Those flowers, monsieur, were a present to me, and I want to keep them!"

He laughed and gave me the tureen. "Of course, it is ridiculous of me. But as you may perceive, mademoiselle, when I am here at Saint-Yriac, I am superstitious like the oldest fisherman in the village!"

I held out my hand to him; he took it and said:

"This is not good-by, remember. It is *au revoir!*"

I tried to smile, but, whether it was the stillness of the evening around us, or the touch of his lips on my hand again, I do not know—for I felt as far from laughter as when I used to kneel with Sister Angélique at the rail of St. Veronica.

"*Au revoir*, monsieur."

"And soon, mademoiselle—*à bientôt!*"

X.

OF course, there is no use worrying over anything that you couldn't help, and which is past and gone. But all the same, I wish that Madame Rondolé hadn't seen me as I came with the tureen out of the forest this afternoon.

I heard her voice behind me—"There she is!" and then her quick feet came flying toward me between the trees, and Monsieur de Castaignac tramping after her. How pretty she looked in her pale flowered muslin, and her beautiful red hair a little ruffled by the low-growing leaves! But this time, at least, I was not glad to see her. I shifted my tureen to the side furthest away

from her, and said, "Good evening, madame."

"It is Joujou!" she cried; "dear little child! I thought that you were that naughty little American, who has run off with our precious Octave."

Octave! My heart felt like stone. I had forgotten that there was such a person in the world!

"Mademoiselle will not blame them for that," said Monsieur de Castaignac, with a smile, "for it seems that she is a truant, she also!"

"Yes, I am late; I have walked too far," I answered, and hurried along to the villa. I hoped to escape from them without any further notice, but those soft brown eyes of Madame Rondolé—nothing could escape from them! "In the name of Heaven, what have you there, my child?" she exclaimed, with a laugh.

There was no escaping now! "Just a tureen," I said, and hurried along.

"The great heavy thing!" cried Madame Rondolé. "Here, Réné, have you no gallantry?"

Monsieur de Castaignac caught it from me; I clung desperately to the china handles.

"It is nothing! Here—I must take it this way, to the kitchen door!"

"We will go with you!" said Madame Rondolé, with that queer soft smile of hers, like a knowing baby. "But wait a moment, dear. At least you will tell us what is in it, this tureen?"

Oh, how I hated her, just then! "Nothing," I answered. "At least—just flowers."

She took off the cover. "Wild flowers—charming! I suppose I need not ask you for a spray?"

"No, you needn't!" I answered, quite rudely, for I had begun to be angry. "That is—I beg your pardon, madame, I did not mean to say that. Take one, please!"

"No, no, dear. I wouldn't rob you, for the world, of your pretty flowers. But this tureen—what an original idea! May I ask, did you find it also in the forest?"

Her eyes glinted at me. I knew what she was thinking of! So I looked straight at her and laughed.

"Yes, madame. You see they grow wild here in Normandy, these tureens!"

"And the ghost—did you also see the ghost?"

"Here is the kitchen door," I said; "*au revoir*, madame!"

So at last I escaped from her. And oh! but I was glad when I thrust the tureen at last into the hands of Victor, who smiled with joy as he placed it back on its shelf and began counting eggs into it by the dozen. Yes, the tureen has made enough mischief; it cannot trouble me any more now.

But oh, those sharp brown eyes of Madame Rondolé! Two or three times

I felt them smiling at me across the dinner-table. What she thinks I do not know; probably if I had nothing to hide, I should not feel that she thinks anything at all!

But she looked at me, then she looked at Hazel, then she looked at Octave; while Monsieur de Castaignac made the sweet eyes at Hazel, and Madame Boussard boomed majestically to auntie about the cathedral at Dieppe, which (it seems) they have visited this afternoon, and papa talked with Monsieur Boussard and poor old Monsieur Rondolé about our new aristocracy of millionaires, and how we are making the old nobility look like a worn-out pair of shoes.

"Your dukes and marquises!" says papa. "What do I give for them and their titles? Bah! I snap my fingers at them!" and he cracked his knuckles in scorn.

I don't like to find fault with anyone, especially with papa. But, after all, the Marquis cannot help his rank.

"A million is a million," says Monsieur Boussard; "but, all the same, a coronet is a coronet!"—and off they went again, sputtering and disputing, so it would have been quite splendid, if only . . . if only papa had taken the other side of the argument!

Hazel laughed at them and teased them and urged them on. "I am on the side of the counts and princes," she said, "like all American girls! Please, Monsieur Poizelle, what is the price of a marquis? Unless the heiress is freckled like a turkey's egg, I suppose you would not ask above a million dollars, would you?"

"The Marquis! Ah, mademoiselle!" and he shook his head with a solemn frown. Octave looked at Hazel in a troubled way, but did not say a word.

Indeed, I could not blame him for looking at Hazel! How pretty she is, with her clear skin and her big blue eyes! . . . Poor Octave! it seems

quite cruel to think that he is not going to marry her, instead of me!

And as for me . . . if I really have to marry Octave Boussard——

"Come, my dear!" said Madame Boussard's majestic bass voice in my ear. "You have not touched a morsel for the last ten minutes. Eat your dinner, my child!"

If she knew that it was the idea of her Octave that had taken away my appetite, I thought, she would not speak so kindly! For in spite of all my trouble, I could hardly keep from laughing, as I went to work and finished my artichokes and listened to her account of Octave's passion for *rosbif* and *cokitails* and everything that is English and American.

It is a pity, indeed, that he is not going to marry Hazel instead of me!

That night, as Hazel and I sat together in our *négligés*, looking out at the forest above us in the darkness,

and talking about everything, it seemed to me that she was asking a great many questions about France,—Is it a pleasant country to live in? Are they really true, those dreadful stories that one hears about Frenchmen? and so on, much more than I could answer for her. "*Mon Dieu*, Hazel," I cried, "one would think then that you were thinking of marrying a Frenchman!"

She laughed, but a little differently from ever before, and it seemed to me that she blushed in the candle-light. "Don't be silly, Joujou!" she said. And just then there came a tap on the door, and Madame Rondolé, in a beautiful pink kimono, popped her pretty little head into the room.

"I'm coming in to talk, too," she said; so in she came and sat down with us. The flowers that Mother Jobard had sent me in the afternoon were standing in a glass vase on the window-sill; Madame Rondolé picked up a spray

and played with it as she talked. Ah, that vexed me, indeed!

"Ah, miss," said she to Hazel, "but you amaze me, you Americans, with your irresistible charm! Here is poor little Castaignac, helpless and subjugated. Do not break his heart, I beg you!"

"There is no need to worry, I assure you, madame!" replied Hazel, rather dryly, I thought.

"He is of excellent family, this little Réné, I assure you, miss! And for the rest, of a perfect *ton*. Let me urge his cause, the poor boy! Just think how charming if you and our little friend here could be married upon the same day—if you became Madame de Castaignac upon the same day that Joujou is married to our friend, Octave Boussard!"

I shivered; it seemed to me that I was going to faint. Hazel's face was a little indistinct in the dim light, but when she spoke it was very lightly and firmly.

"So, Joujou, you are going to marry Octave? Best wishes, my dear!"

I did not answer; Madame Rondolé laughed that pretty little gurgle of hers. "But certainly, it is all arranged. Did you not know that? Though, as yet, it is only spoken of between friends."

"I understand, of course," replied Hazel quietly, and just then Johanne came in to brush my hair for the night. Madame Rondolé turned the conversation briskly.

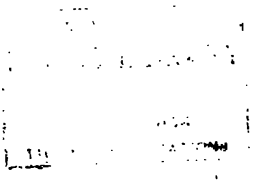
"Look then at those beautiful yellow locks!" said she. "My dear, in a year all Paris will be raving about you!"

She gathered up my hair and looped it lightly over my head. Johanne stood waiting patiently.

"There, that is all that is needed," said Madame Rondolé, "and perhaps a little touch of color, to add *chic* to the effect. Here, this flower will do!" and just above my ear she twisted the scarlet



Joujou.



spray that she held in her hand. "Ah, exquisite!" she cried.

But Johanne jumped as though she had been shot, and snatched the flower from my head with a jerk that carried away a handful of hair as well. "Who has dared to bring these flowers near my little mademoiselle?" she cried, glaring around from one of us to the other.

Madame Rondolé laughed. "Don't be excited, my good woman. Your little mistress found them in the forest, this afternoon, didn't you, my dear?"

"What is there wrong about them, Johanne?" cried Hazel.

"Wrong enough, indeed!" muttered Johanne, and took up the comb again. But not another word would she say.

Madame Rondolé rose to her feet with a little yawn. "Good-night, dear little ones! How charming it has been, this little chat. And now, good-night, and sleep well!" She kissed her hand to us

and flitted out of the room. Hazel turned to Johanne.

"Johanne, I am very thirsty. Will you bring me a glass of water, please?"

Johanne nodded, though she still looked rather disturbed. But she likes Hazel, who is always polite to her. "Yes, mademoiselle," she said, with a courtesy, and left the room. There was a little pause, then Hazel turned to me.

"So you are going to marry Octave Boussard!" she said. "It seems odd, I never heard it spoken of before."

"It's not to be spoken of yet, papa said," I answered, trying to keep my voice steady. The wind blowing softly in at the window brought me the scent of those aromatic scarlet flowers, and just for the flash of a moment I remembered this afternoon, I remembered an earlier moment, when I had played that I was a Queen of France . . . oh, never, never again must I think of it!

"My dear!" cried Hazel, "what is the matter, what have I said?"

"Nothing," I answered, but my voice sounded choked and queer.

Hazel paused a moment. "Joujou," she said, "I am going to say the truth, straight out—it's the only way that comes natural to me." She hesitated again. "You mustn't think . . . you mustn't think that I have meant to interfere with . . . with anything that belongs to you. I'd rather die, I think, than make trouble like that! You see, I didn't know anything about this . . . and I don't quite understand the ways of your country. But it has been all play, dear, and your Octave is all yours, I am sure!"

I had to speak; the words came tearing out of me, without any will of my own. "He's not my Octave!" I cried. "I don't want him! I'd rather die than marry Octave Boussard!"

Hazel threw up her head, quite indignant. "What is there wrong about

Octave Boussard?" she said; then she began to laugh, in a relieved, broken kind of way. "How ridiculous I am!" she said. "Of course, you just mean you don't want to *marry* him! And I am sure, against your will, that no one can force you to, can they?"

I thought of papa, and Perfumery Poizelle, and the majestic Madame Boussard. "I don't know," I said weakly; "but this much I do know. I would rather jump into the sea than marry him!" And in spite of myself I felt the tears squeeze from between my eyelids.

Hazel took my hand. "Poor little dear!" she said. "It's a pity you don't live in America! For at home, there, you see, we marry whomever we please."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" I cried, "but I wish I lived there in America!"

Hazel looked at me a little sharply. "Don't think I'm an impertinent wretch to ask," she said softly, "but tell me, Joujou—is there anybody else?"

Ah! that made me realize how foolish I had been. Anybody else? What right had I to think that anyone would give a thought to me, plain little Joujou? I felt my face burning, and I turned away my head.

"There . . . there," said Hazel, squeezing my hand in such a friendly way, "I won't ask you any more questions! But there is one thing sure," she added, with a laugh, "and that is, Madame Rondolé intends that you shall marry Octave Boussard!"

"Why, what has she got to do with it?"

"Don't you see?" cried Hazel. "She finds it very convenient to have Octave at her beck and call! *Mon Dieu*, what a country! Madame Boussard told me that it was Madame Rondolé who had formed Octave's mind and manners, and introduced him to the world. Pooh! his manners would have been no less charming, without any trouble of hers. And

as for his mind—thank Heaven, she hasn't spoiled that yet!"

"But what has that to do," I asked, "with my marrying Octave?"

"If Octave marries you," said Hazel, "a dear sweet unselfish little thing, that hasn't a mean thought about anything or anybody in the world, don't you see? She thinks she can still have Octave as her humble servant, and his automobile as her own. Very nice for her, no doubt! But if you were to marry anybody else, and Octave were to marry . . . some hard-hearted, independent, knowing sort of creature, who could see through Madame Rondolé's plans——"

She began to laugh, a little nervously, and jumped to her feet. "What nonsense I am talking!" she cried. "But still, I confess, I should like to get the best of this little Madame Rondolé!"

"Here is your water, mademoiselle," said Johanne's voice in our ears. Hazel took the glass, and leaned over to kiss

me good-night. "Pleasant dreams, dear!" she said, "and remember, if there is anything I can do to help you, you have only to let me know!"

So she went off and closed her door. She is the nicest girl in the world, I think!

"Mademoiselle!" said Johanne, "I beg you, let me throw away these flowers!"

The poor flowers! "What is the matter with them?" I said, quite crossly.

"Mademoiselle does not know, then?" cried Johanne, astonished.

"No—they are pretty; that's all I know."

"*Bon Dieu du bois*, mademoiselle! But every peasant in Normandy knows that from the days of the fairies, these flowers have been a sure charm for the kindling of——"

"Of what, Johanne?"

"Bah! does one say such things to a young girl? Very well, then—of love!"

I shivered a little; I remembered how the Marquis had said, "This is not right—let me throw away these flowers!" To be sure, he had laughed at himself, afterwards. . . . It was all absurd, this Old World superstition!

"Nonsense!" I said.

"Mademoiselle, that little ancestress of yours, of whom I have told you . . . her garden was planted with these flowers. That is not nonsense, *hein?*"

I was silent. She blew out the candles.

"Good-night, and sleep well, my little mademoiselle!"

XI.

IT is not hard, after all, to have a secret!

To be sure, it makes you rather miserable to think that you are doing what you ought not to do; you pretend that you have the toothache or the headache, when the time comes that you should go to confession—and when anybody looks at you a little hard or speaks to you suddenly, you shake all over like a lap-dog on a snowy day.

Yes, except for those few moments every day when you are so happy that you hardly dare to breathe, you are so miserable that you never want to breathe again. But still, it is not difficult to fly away by yourself for a walk in the

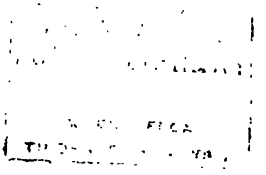
woods . . . in the early morning, before people have come downstairs for the second breakfast, or toward the end of the afternoon, when they are drinking *five-o'clock* or playing bridge. You are ashamed of yourself, you resolve that you will never go there any more . . . but it is so strange, the very next chance, off you run and do what you have vowed you will never do again!

So all these past weeks, there has hardly been a day that I have not walked in the garden. And though of course it makes no difference to me, still it is very curious—but it always seems to happen that just at that time, the Marquis walks there too.

Really, when you come to know him well, you quite forget that he is a marquis at all. He does not wear nearly such fine clothes as Octave Boussard, and he does not make grand bows and compliments like Monsieur de Cas-



But it always seems to happen that just
at that time the Marquis walks there too



taignac. His manners are so simple and natural, you would not think he was anybody at all, if it were not for something in his eyes and in the curl of his lip, that makes you remember sometimes, that for hundreds and hundreds of years, his ancestors had every knee in the neighborhood bowed to them.

It seems strange to me sometimes, what he can find to interest him in talking to me—just Joujou Poizelle. For it is true, he does seem to be interested in what I say!

It surprises me all the time, but he asks my opinion about things, and listens to my stories, and laughs at all my jokes, just as Octave laughs when Hazel tells about America. Then he tells me about his regiment and his campaigns in Madagascar and funny people that he has met and books that he has read—so interesting! But the curious thing is, that when all the stories are told, and the time is near

for me to go home again . . . and we just sit there in the summer-house, or by the edge of the fountain . . . not saying a word, not a word . . . but just sitting there among the quiet old statues, with the wind rustling the grasses about us and the crows cawing high over our heads . . . it is a very strange thing, but that is almost the pleasantest of all.

It is more than I can understand, but when we sit together that way, quite silent, it seems to me that I am not myself any more; and yet at the same time that I am myself, my true self, for the first time in my life! When I look up and meet his eyes looking down at me, everything seems uncertain around me; I am helpless—yet glad, too! He smiles at me . . . and then I try to talk. Yet that seems the most useless and foolish of all—because when those eyes of his run through me, I feel that he knows

already, quite well, everything that I could say.

Yet it does not make me feel frightened or troubled, like Madame Rondolé's eyes when they glance at me across the table. For she has not forgotten it, the tart and the soup-tureen!

Sometimes when I come in from my walk in the woods, I meet her walking among the clematis with Octave or with Monsieur de Castaignac. And then I am so frightened that I don't dare to go back to the garden for a whole day,—sometimes for two days,—but just sit by Madame Boussard's side, helping her make flannel chemises for her poor, or winding embroidery cotton for auntie, while the talk goes on all around me.

Poor Octave, he looks rather downcast, these days, for he hardly ever gets a chance to talk with Hazel any more. It is with Monsieur de Castaignac that she disputes nowadays, about duels and falling in love and hunting big game

in America. Sometimes Octave comes up, with a grave, determined air, and joins their conversation, and then Hazel laughs and talks so gaily that she seems strange, somehow. And Madame Rondolé taps her pretty little foot on the floor, and smiles her knowing little baby smile.

Yes, things are all at sixes and sevens, at the Villa Clematis. The only comfort is that July is drawing to an end, and the last day of July takes our guests away with it—and glad enough I shall be, to see them all go! . . . All except Hazel, of course. She is the dearest girl in the world, and when I am with her, I don't feel so afraid of myself and of everything around me.

For it is quite plain, everything is going exactly as it shouldn't at the Villa Clematis. Sometimes I ask myself: Is this then the evil eye of the old Mother Jobard?

XII.

THIS is what happened yesterday.

In the afternoon we all went down to the beach, to see Hazel and Octave go into the water. So Madame Rondolé insisted on going in too, in such a lumpy flannel bathing-dress—not that she really went in, either; for she just stood on the edge of the waves, and every time the water rolled up to her feet she just dipped in one of her toes. Then when she found it was wet she would scream with that baby giggle of hers, and clutch Monsieur de Castaignac, who stood by with her long silk coat—so silly!

But Hazel was charming. She wore a black satin bathing-dress, the prettiest

thing I ever saw; and when she dove into the surf and came shooting up like a black arrow through the white foam, all the fisherwomen and men and their children came running down from their little thatched houses, to look on. As for Octave, he followed wherever Hazel led, of course. It was splendid, quite like a circus!

As I can't swim, and don't want to look silly like Madame Rondolé, I just sat on the beach with auntie and Madame Boussard, and listened to them talk about how servants burn too much coal, and waste the electric light in the kitchen. Papa walked up and down with Monsieur Rondolé, looking bored. For Monsieur Boussard is gone to Paris for a few days; and poor old Monsieur Rondolé —I do not think that papa finds him very amusing!

But all the time, as I sat there so quiet with my embroidery, there was a

thought, hot and secret, at my heart. . . .

Finally they had enough of the salt water, and we all trailed back again up the little white path that leads up between the cliffs. The bathers went upstairs to dress; auntie carried off Madame Boussard to look at the linen-closet and the new set of embroidered sheets from Paris. It was not yet time for *five-o'clock* (for we are so *chic* now, we drink tea every afternoon, just like the English!). I sat down on the piazza near papa and Monsieur Rondolé, who smoked cigars and read *Parisian Life*. Really, there seemed no reason why I should not walk in the woods for a little while, if I chose.

I have often thought that when I die, and everything I know slips away from me, and I come out in a new world, quiet and fragrant and far-away, the change will be something like going up the hill from the Villa Clematis, from the gilding and the laughter, to my

hidden garden. There is no noise there, just the leaves rustling in the soft breeze overhead, and the water trickling so slowly from the poor old nymph's sea-shell in the centre of the fountain.

Whether I should find anyone there this afternoon, I did not know. It did not seem very nice, somehow, for me to think of that, though it is hard to help it! But, sure enough, there was the Marquis, walking slowly up and down one of the little green paths, and reading from a book in his hand.

He looked up as I came through the green straggling hedge of box, out of breath, with my hair falling into my eyes—so untidy.

"Ah, you have come at last!" he cried, and came up to meet me. It was silly of me, but my heart knocked suddenly against my side, as I saw that the book in his hand was my old friend, Alain Chartier.

"I can stay only a few moments to-day," I said, softly, as we walked to the far end of the garden, and as I sat down on the wide stone ledge of the old summer-house — just as we had done almost every day for the past month, "for, you see, I really ought not to have come, at all."

"No, please don't talk of going home, yet, Mademoiselle Joujou!" The Marquis sat down by me, and spoke so earnestly, I tried to laugh a little in answer . . . but it always makes me feel serious, somehow, to hear him call me by my name, like that. (He asked me, yesterday, if I could ever think of calling him Guy . . . but I said, Oh no, no indeed!)

"But why," he said, "do you find it necessary to stay so short a time to-day?"

"Monsieur . . . you know . . . it is not quite right for me to be here at all! And beside that, they have

begun to laugh at me, at home, that I walk so often alone in the woods. And Madame Rondolé smiles, and says, I must show her also the ghosts and the haunted gardens of Saint-Yriac. . . . So you see—— Oh, truly, I don't feel that I ought to stay!"

The Marquis shook his head slowly. "I suppose that you are right; it is unfortunate, indeed, that things are as they are. . . . But still, there is the future before us; and when two people agree, it is possible to work wonders. What do you think, Mademoiselle Joujou! Isn't it possible? Isn't it?" He turned, quick and eager, and leaned toward me with that look of his that I like so much, in his eyes. I like it, yet it frightens me a little, too; for this time he looked so anxious, so determined!

I shrank back a little in my seat, and leaned on the stone window-sill. "I don't know . . ." I said, and he smiled at me.

"You like it, this old garden?" he asked me.

"Oh, so much!" I cried.

He turned and looked down across the garden below us—the crumbling stone-work, the mouldy paths, and the bright straggling flowers, all warm and quiet together in the soft breezy sunshine. "How wise it is, this old garden!" he said, softly; "the two mysteries, love and death . . . it has seen them both, long ago, but it still remembers. . . . Don't you think so, mademoiselle?"

It is strange when you find that someone else feels what you feel, and have hardly dared to own even to yourself! "Yes," I answered, trying to smile,—"Yes, monsieur!"

He turned from the garden and looked again at me; my head was bent, but I felt his eyes, warm and piercing, upon me. "You remember that story I told you at the Golf Club that day,"

he said, "of those two lovers for whom the garden was built, more than a century ago—my unfortunate ancestor and his beautiful sweetheart, who drowned herself in the fountain?"

"I remember," I answered.

He went on dreamily. "They are of an unimaginable charm to me, all those Old World tales! Perhaps because when I am at my work, I hear of nothing but quick-firing guns, and forage, and columns of squadron . . . when I come home to my ancient Normandy, perhaps that is the reason that I let myself drift back into the mists of the ancient past—until I am not sure whether I am *now*, or *then;* whether I am myself, or one of those old Saint-Yriacs, who had such a wicked merry time of it, so long ago. Absurd, is it not, mademoiselle?"

"No, no!" I cried, "for I feel just the same!"

He smiled at me. "You do? I am

glad of that! Though it is absurd, just the same! For these two lived long ago. They loved each other very well, no doubt, but it soon came to an end, their little happiness; and as my faithful old servant, Mother Jobard, says: 'Now that they are dead, they are dead!'"

It all seems dreadfully sad, somehow. "But at least," I said, "they were happy for a little while!"

"Yes, they were happy, for a little while. . . . Mademoiselle, I was reading, just now. You remember what he says, your friend, old Alain Chartier—he whose book you found beside the fountain?"

I felt my face growing scarlet. "I remember," I said, "some things that he said."

"These are the lines, mademoiselle, that come back to me." He opened the book, and turned the leaves. "He knew what love was, this old poet! as well as these wise old statues around us

know, and that hollow fountain. Here is the place. Listen, mademoiselle; do you agree with him also?

"'*Car en amours*
Courte joye, longues douleurs.'"

Yes, I remembered them, those lines, though I had read them a month ago, without a thought of their real meaning, their sadness or their sweetness—

"*For in love we gain*
Brief joy, and life-long pain."

"You find the lines beautiful, mademoiselle?"

"Oh, so beautiful! but very sad."

"Yes, they are sad. But then, what would you? For I think that I myself am sad to-day . . . when I think that this happy month is at an end, and how soon my furlough is done, and I must leave Saint-Yriac."

"What!" I cried, "you are going away?"

"Ah, mademoiselle! Do you believe then that I go of my own free will?"

We were silent. It seemed to me that the world had come to an end . . . that all around me was thick gray mist, with faces peering out and grinning at me; the face of Octave Boussard! and just behind him, half in the shadow, the face of Madame Rondolé. It was all emptiness . . . misery. . . .

I put my thumb in my mouth and bit it as hard as I could; I had no business to feel so! What difference should it make to me,—why should I shiver all over and turn cold around my heart, because I heard that the Marquis of Saint-Yriac was going back to his regiment?

"I confess," said the Marquis slowly, as though to himself, "I have come to a dead wall. For I cannot go away, until—— And yet! . . ."

He started to his feet and walked

once or twice up and down the pavilion. Somehow, when I saw him so embarrassed, so distressed, I felt suddenly strong! not a little girl any more, but sure of myself, like Hazel or Madame Rondolé. This silence! I could not have this silence any more. So I began to talk, the first thing that came into my head.

"Ah, monsieur, but it is foolish to be sad. They are quite wrong, these sorrowful poems that you read. For myself, I love best to be gay; and I know only songs that tell of cheerful things, and happiness!"

He came again and sat down by me. The embarrassment was gone from his face; and as for me, I remembered that there were still some days left. It was not time yet, to say good-by!

"So you sing only songs of joy, mademoiselle? That is as it should be, indeed!"

"Of course," I answered. But indeed it was not true, for just then, it seemed to me, I felt everything but joy. The Marquis leaned toward me.

"Mademoiselle, I have told you what he has to say, this old poet of mine. And now, don't you think that it would be fair for you to tell me what they say, these poets of yours, that you speak about? What are their songs—what do they say of this life of ours, mademoiselle?"

"But I only know such foolish, childish songs, that I learned at the convent, monsieur!"

"Sing me one of them—sing to me, mademoiselle! I know from the tone of your voice, from your eyes even, how sweetly you must sing!"

He bent toward me, coaxing, with that winning look in his eyes that makes me feel as though I would rather please him than do anything else in the world. But still—"How can I

sing, without any piano, monsieur?" I said.

"You don't need a piano, just to sing for me! Ah, mademoiselle, as softly as you please! You need not be afraid that I shall lose a note!"

A bluebird perched for an instant on the bough of a horse-chestnut near us, and sang, and flew away. As I watched the little bright wings glinting among the leaves, suddenly I remembered my little song of Victor Hugo, that I had sung for auntie and papa, the first day that we were here at Saint-Yriac—the little song that tells how it is no use for the bird in the forest to sing any more, because there is another voice that will always sound so much sweeter than hers . . . the song about the Drum, in fact, that I could never understand!

"That poor bluebird!" said the Marquis, laughing; "she knows better than to stay here, she and her stu-

pid little music! And now . . . ah, mademoiselle!"

His voice was full of laughter and coaxing, yet earnest, too . . . different, indeed, from any voice I ever heard before. Perhaps . . . perhaps that was what they meant, those verses that had puzzled me for so long. I did not stop to think; I began to sing because I could not help it; very softly, my voice hushed almost under my breath, so that it hardly broke the quiet of the forest around us, or the silence of the poor old dead things we sat among.

I never knew before how sweet and how terrible it is, that song. . . . For really, when you think what it means, that's no joke, you know: the voice that is dearer and more thrilling than the bird singing in the trees . . . the eyes that are brighter than the stars, and the heart deeper and more fragrant than the cup of an April lily.

Though I did not look up, I knew the Marquis's eyes were on me as I sang. I caught my breath as I came to the last verse—the silly one, that I always hated so. All in a flash, I remembered Alain Chartier, and his little lines that the Marquis had read to me just a moment before.

"Cet oiseau de flamme
Cet astre du jour
Cette fleur de l'ame
S'appelle—l'amour!"

I knew it at last—the songbird of fire, the star of day, the blossom of the soul . . . it was love. Yes, it was love, of course; and I had never thought of it till this minute!

A black-and-yellow cricket at my feet leaped from crack to crack of the stone flagging; a lock of hair fell down into my eyes, and I put it back with my hand. The Marquis was still looking at me. It seemed to me in

the stillness that I could hear my heart beating, like a clock

The Marquis leaned over and took my hand; I tried to draw it away, but I did not want to. . . .

"Joujou," he said, "wise little girl, where did you learn all that?"

I tried to answer, but my voice sounded queer. "I don't know," I said.

"For it's true," he said softly, "every word of it. Your eyes, dear —your voice!"

I shut my eyes and held my breath. I felt his face near mine; his voice was quick and strange.

"Joujou," he said, "do you remember the first day that we met here in the garden? Do you remember the flowers that the old Mother Jobard sent to you? And now, even Alain Chartier, and your little song—they all mean all the same thing—even my dream that I told you of, when I first

came here a month ago. You remember it, do you, that dream of mine?"

I started. Did I remember it, that day in the garden . . . or was it, as he said, a dream!

"Joujou, why do you start? Ah! I wonder, is it possible . . . have you had dreams of your own, you also, here in this old haunted garden . . . this garden haunted by the ghost of love?"

I did not answer; for his eyes were looking into mine, and it seemed to me that he knew already, quite well, everything that I could say. . . . His hand was on mine, but the touch was not new or strange. It seemed to me that I had come back where I belonged —back after long, long years, to the place where I belonged . . . the place that had been intended for me, from the beginning of the world.

"Joujou, listen to me! I love you as I have never loved anything else in the whole earth!"

I opened my eyes and looked into his, wide-open and shining just near my own. I couldn't speak a word; my lips were stiff and trembling. But I smiled at him. . . . And he kissed me on the cheek.

How still it was all around us—but for the bees humming among the flowers, and the faint far-off sound of the sea. . . .

Suddenly, from behind the high box border came the crackling of dry twigs under foot, and then a little laugh—a soft mocking gurgle, like a wicked baby. The Marquis jumped to his feet; and the next instant, Madame Rondolé stepped out from behind the dark green hedge, dressed all in scarlet, like one of the poppies around her come suddenly to life, and a scarlet parasol swaying over her pretty, smiling, hateful little face. Behind her walked Monsieur de Castaignac, very stiff and demure.

For an instant she pretended not to see us, and looked about at the flowers and the moss-grown statues, with the most innocent air in the world. "Charming, is it not, Réné!" she cried. "Yes, this is the haunted garden; I am sure of that!" Then she tilted her parasol and let her eyes travel slowly to the summer-house. "Haunted, yes!" she cried; "and, *mon Dieu,* behold the ghosts!"

It was no use pretending or trying to escape; so I came down the wide stone steps that led into the garden, very cold and dignified, with my head held as high as I could manage. Even if I was half-dead with embarrassment and fear, at least she should not know it! The Marquis ran down to meet her, smiling.

"Madame Rondolé!" he said, "do you do me the honor to remember me? And Castaignac . . . how are you, my friend!"

Monsieur de Castaignac bowed in an embarrassed, far-off kind of way. Madame Rondolé laughed again.

"I remember you very well, Monsieur de Saint-Yriac," she said, "and your story at the Golf Club, of the haunted garden—which fired my fancy so that I have longed ever since to see it. So that now, quite by accident, I have found it, you see!" And she shot her brown eyes at him, sweet and spiteful too.

"I see, monsieur," said she, "that the ghosts have restored your book—just as they restored the soup-tureen of Mademoiselle Joujou."

Ah, that wicked old soup-tureen, that made all the trouble! . . . The Marquis bowed. . . . "As you say, madame!"

"They are honest ghosts, indeed! And for the rest,"—she opened her eyes wide and round, and poked her red lips in that baby pout that she

puts on when she says anything particularly hateful,—"and for the rest, have they brought you any more strawberry tarts, monsieur—or any more dreams?"

I felt my face go crimson as her eyes shot over me. There was nothing, nothing! for me to say. But the Marquis threw up his head and looked back at her, very grave and proud.

"Madame," he answered, "I am not particularly concerned with dreams, any more. For now, you see, I have come to the questions of real life!"

"Oh, yes, we are all wide awake now, no doubt of that!" responded Madame Rondolé, so sweetly. "But now—the ghosts refuse to appear, and I am chilly after my bath. Joujou, *chérie*, will you stay here with monsieur, or will you come home with me?"

Yes, she had claws under her velvet paws, just as I had known all along, this Madame Rondolé; though why she should use them to scratch me,—me,

who had never done her any harm,—that was more than I could understand. Suddenly I remembered what Hazel had said, that Madame Rondolé would never let me marry anybody but Octave Boussard. There was nothing for me to do, except to smile and pretend that I was not hurt. I felt sick, and dazed, and stupid; but I knew how I should feel, later, when I should realize what had happened, and the hurt had gone into my soul!

However, I smiled at her.

"I am chilly, too," I said. "I think, that if you will allow me, I will go home with you, madame."

The Marquis bowed. "I kiss your hand, madame! And, mademoiselle, I shall hope to see you again, at the Villa Clematis—you, and monsieur your father, as well. Castaignac, *au revoir!*"

And, very stately and dignified, he turned and walked from the garden.

Madame Rondolé took my arm in hers, and we started down the hill-side, with Monsieur de Castaignac holding back the boughs for us, and carrying the red lace sunshade of madame.

"Hold, he is handsome like a dream, that young marquis!" said Madame Rondolé; "your papa will be delighted to hear of his honoring the Poizelle domain with his noble presence—will he not, my dear?"

It was no use to say anything, I could see that. She smiled so pleasantly to see me troubled, and all through dinner she lamented my poor appetite and urged me to eat my sweetbreads and chicory, in the sweetest way in the world.

"She is pale, our little Joujou!" said Madame Boussard. And auntie and all the rest of them turned and looked at me, and wagged their heads, and said, "Yes, she is pale!"—so that when dinner was at last over, I was

glad to say, Yes, I had a headache—and to make my excuses and goodnights.

But I didn't want to go to my room, where I knew Johanne was waiting to ask me questions, and rub my temples with Water of Night-blooming Cereus. Not that she is not always kind and good to me, poor old Johanne! but even her eyes and her questions seemed to me just then more than I could bear.

So I went to the veranda, where the clematis vines were rustling in the little night-wind that drew up from the Channel, and the stars shining through the flowers looked cold and far-away. I had never thought it would feel like this to be unhappy—such a dull thick sort of pain in your heart, and your feet like lead. . . .

All I wanted was to be alone—to hide away where there was no one to look at me, and where I shouldn't have to pretend and look pleasant,

any more. They would all be out here on the veranda in a few moments, I knew that! So without caring where I went, I rushed down the gravelled path across the garden, with the flowers smelling sweet in the dark all about me, and the night swallows flying low about my head.

Suddenly I found myself by the stables. There was no one about; the coachmen and chauffeurs were all in the kitchen, taking their dinners. In the line of dimly lighted stalls, I could hear the horses crunching their oats—a nice soft comfortable sound—and the open door of the garage nearby yawned big and black like a cave.

Here was the shelter I was looking for! So I tiptoed across the floor in the dark, among wheels and oil-cans and all kinds of machinery that I could not see. Which automobile it was that I clambered into at last I did not know, but the cushions were slippery

and soft; and as I crept into the friendly depth of the tonneau, it seemed to me that at last I was hidden away from all the world.

From the piazza of the villa, above me on the hill, I could hear Hazel's voice singing such funny little American songs that I could not understand; but her voice was sweet and as she sang she played her mandolin. Every little while I could hear Octave's voice crying, "Bravo!" or "Encore!"—Octave and Monsieur de Castaignac. As for Madame Rondolé, I did not dare to think with whom she sat, or what she was talking of. . . .

Yes, my dream was over, I knew that. Never again should we sit and talk together in the garden, the Marquis and I. Soon he would go away to his regiment, and I could not even see him to say good-by. Never again. . . . I put my hand to my cheek, where he had kissed me this

afternoon. . . . I was not ashamed, or even afraid, when I thought of that —or even of the kiss I had given him in his sleep, long ago in the garden.

No, that was not what troubled me. For I remembered papa's face, as it had looked when Mother Jobard laughed at him, and told me that the Marquis would be glad to see me in Saint-Yriac. It is strange how much she knows, that old woman! But, ah, papa's face when he hears that name! To-morrow he will know all about it; he will come and ask me what I have done.

But even that I could bear—his face and his voice, and knowing that I had been bad and disobedient and ungrateful, to make friends with the person that papa hates the most of all in the whole world. . . . But when I think that I shall never hear the Marquis's voice again, never feel his hand on mine. . . .

I wonder, did that little ancestress of mine feel something like this, when she threw herself into the fountain up there in my dear garden behind the trees? After all, it was not so strange!

For in spite of my little song, so cheerful and so gay, it seems that the star must set, and the flower wither, and the songbird fly away.



"I don't want to see you again for the rest of my life"

XIII.

IT is strange, but when one sits alone in the dark, thinking very hard about something, one does not know if it is minutes that have gone by, or days, or hours. I did not even hear steps, or notice anything coming; till all of a sudden a light glared into my eyes, and a voice cried out:

"*Jove*, what's this!"

And there on the floor beside the automobile, his eyes almost on a level with mine, and lit up by the little electric lantern in his hand—there stood Octave staring at me. What would he think of me, finding me like this? Oh, how I hated him! I tried to answer, and make up some silly excuse—but

my breath came in gasps as though I had been running, and my voice was sewed in my throat.

"You are playing hide-and-go-seek, mademoiselle?" cried Octave again, with one of his English laughs that made every gong in the garage tingle and ring. Then suddenly, as the light shifted and fell upon the face that I turned toward him, his eyes changed and his voice dropped to sudden concern and fear:

"Mademoiselle! you are in tears! What's the matter? Tell me what has happened to you?"

It was very good of him, of course, to speak so kindly to me, but just the same, the sight of his face just then, and the thought that I was to see it every day and all day long for the rest of my life, were aggravating to a point that I could not bear.

"Go away!" I cried. I did not mean to be rude, really, but the words came tearing out of me in spite of my-

self. "I don't want to have you speak to me; I don't want to see you again for the rest of my life. I hate you! Go away!"

And I glared down at him from my high seat in the automobile, like a tiger-cat spitting at the crowd from her cage in the Garden of Plants.

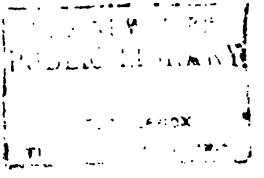
Poor Octave! First he looked white, then he turned a dark vermilion red. Then in spite of myself and my horror of him, I had to admire him a little bit; for instead of flying into a rage at the unpleasant things I had just said to him, he looked up at me quite gently, with a little smile.

"That is my misfortune, Mademoiselle Joujou—but just the same, you must see that it is impossible for me to leave you all alone here. I beg you that you will allow me to conduct you back to the house!"

The firmness in his tone, and his air of having a right to say what I should



"I don't want to see you again for the rest of my life"



do or shouldn't do, drove me quite wild. At that moment, it seemed to matter nothing what I said to him—for so far as I could see into the future, I had lost everything that could make life pleasant or happy to me—and for the rest, whether I tried to pretend politely, or spoke straight out, what difference could it make? So I leaned my face down toward his, with the first words that flashed into my mind.

"The time is coming soon enough," I cried, "when I shall have to let you conduct me wherever you want to, whether I am willing or not. But now, at least, you have no rights over me. Go away, I tell you; go away!"

But still he did not move. He stood staring at me, but without seeing me; his eyes were looking inward, even in my rage and trouble I could see that,—looking inward at thoughts and sudden visions that had never entered his brain until that moment. "Yes," he

said slowly, "I suppose it is as good as settled, we two are to marry each other some day." . . . Then looking up at me suddenly,—"Mademoiselle," he said, "if I may judge from this sudden frankness with which you honor me, the idea of marriage with me is not especially agreeable to you?"

It makes me blush all over now to think how rude I was to him, that poor Octave! But it was by no will of mine; the words seemed to say themselves:

"Marry you?" I cried. "I'd rather die!"

The moment I said it, I felt how very ill-bred and uncomplimentary such a remark must sound to him—but before I had time to explain, or to apologize, I jumped with surprise to see his face turned up to me—not furious, not indignant, but smiling,—smiling with that nice merry grin that I see on his face sometimes when he

is making little jokes to his mother, or listening to Hazel's stories about America.

"Mademoiselle Joujou," he exclaimed, "you are serious?"

In spite of myself, I began to laugh a little too—which seemed to prove to him that I was serious, after all. For he added, with a long breath of relief and in the most earnest tone in the world:

"Then, mademoiselle, I swear to you—the last wish in my heart is to marry you!"

How tall, how dignified he looked as he stood there with the pale light of the little lantern on his face! For the first time, I began to see what people might find attractive in him, and even handsome, too! Not like Guy, of course . . . but then, who is like Guy?

"Mademoiselle, we understand each other!" Octave's voice, cheerful and

firm, broke across the hurry of my thoughts; "you refuse to marry me—I refuse to marry you!"

"Oh, thank you with all my heart—thank you a thousand times!" I cried, and stretched out both my hands to him over the high-walled side of the automobile. He laughed a little, as he put the lantern down and took my hands in such a kind, friendly clasp.

"Not very complimentary to each other, are we, mademoiselle! But this is our compact—we shake hands upon our bargain. From this day forth we are not *fiancés*, but friends and allies!"

He released my hands and opened the door of the automobile in which I sat. My heart rose in a sudden wave of remorse for the rudeness that I had shown him. "Then, please . . ." I cried, "will you forgive me for all the horrid things I said to you just now? I didn't mean them, you know; it was just my bad temper . . . and I

think you are just as good as you can be, and I wish you all the happiness in the world!"

Poor Octave! He started a little at my last words, and looked suddenly serious. "You don't know what a large and complex matter it is, that last wish of yours, mademoiselle!" he answered, with a little laugh,—"and now, I regret to say that if your aunt or my mother were to come upon this little interview of ours, they might not recognize it as merely a friendly counsel of war. I beg you, for your own sake, to hurry back to the house as quickly as you can. For myself, I must stay and scold my chauffeur for his carelessness in exposing my machine to the night-air—though I am sure the blunder was a lucky one for me!"

I stepped down from the automobile as quickly as I could—I knew perfectly well that his words were true. After this afternoon, and the way that

Madame Rondolé's eyes had looked at me in the garden, I knew that people don't think very kind things of you, when they find you talking with a young man . . . even with Octave, probably. So I hurried to the door. Suddenly I heard Octave's voice behind me—quick and changed, with an odd thrill of laughter in it that I had never heard before.

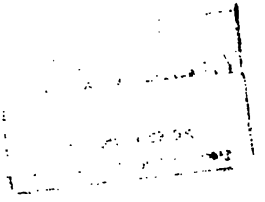
"If you see Miss Walker, mademoiselle, I beg you to say good-night to her for me!"

And as he turned back to his machine I heard him sigh—sigh as though, like me, he wanted something very, very much . . . something that he was afraid he might never have. . . .

Nobody saw me as I crept in at the carriage-door, and slipped upstairs as quiet as a thief. In my own room poor old Johanne was waiting for me, to fuss over me and put me to bed.



Two teaspoonfuls of bitter stuff
out of a large brown bottle.



She was very kind, as she always is, but to-night I thought that she would never go. And when at last she blew out the candle and trotted off, with her, "Good-night, my little mademoiselle!" it seemed to me that never had I felt such relief as when the door closed behind her, and I was safe and alone at last.

I got up and went to the window; and there I knelt in my night-dress, with my elbows on the sill and my eyes looking up at the stars—just as I had done that first night we spent in Saint-Yriac, so long ago.

To be sure, Octave had been kind. He would never marry me now, I was sure of that, in spite of Papa Boussard and all the chocolate in the world—and Perfumery Poizelle to boot! But then I thought of papa, and the blue dints that quiver in his nose whenever he hears anyone mention the name of Saint-Yriac—and I knew that Octave's

kindness brought me, after all, no nearer to Guy.

In the castle, black and high up above me in the darkness, there was a single light—a faint glimmer from one of the narrow windows. I wondered if he was awake—if his heart was sore like mine, my dear, dear Guy. . . .

" *For in love we gain*
Brief joy, and life-long pain."

XIV.

IN the morning Johanne brought in my chocolate and roll, but I could not eat a thing. So later auntie came — poor auntie! — and and made me swallow two teaspoonfuls of bitter stuff out of a large brown bottle. She declared my head was hot, and I could not go automobiling with them all to Dieppe. I didn't care. It made no difference to me.

Auntie went away. They were all talking and laughing on the piazza below my window, and the automobiles touf-toufing, and the chauffeurs scolding —all very gay. My fingers were heavy, so it was hard to dress. I was glad that I did not have to go to Dieppe.

Suddenly steps came up the stairs, heavy and quick. I stood still with my comb in my hand. The steps stopped before my door. The door burst open and papa came in.

When I saw his face I shut my eyes. I forgot all my own troubles and sadness—I remembered only how good he had always been to me, and what a wicked, ungrateful girl I had been to him.

"Joujou," he said, "is this true, this story that I hear from Madame Rondolé?"

I did not answer. "So," he said, "my daughter has been meeting the Seigneur, the wolf of Saint-Yriac, alone, upon my grounds? Answer me, Joujou! Is this true?"

I could not deny it, I could not speak. So I nodded my head. Papa's face as he looked at me was all purple and curious, with little blue dints about his mouth. He choked as he breathed, so he could hardly speak.

"Then it is true," he said, and clutched my arm; "all this time, and I never knew!" Suddenly he poked his face up into mine, so that his eyes glared so close they seemed to wither me. "Joujou," he said in a whisper, "what has happened? Tell me the truth!"

He shook my arm so that I thought it would break. The tears came into my eyes and poured down my cheeks. "Papa," I said, "I don't know what you mean. I didn't really mean to do wrong—when I talked with the Marquis in the garden—and, oh, I am so sorry!"

"Sorry!" he sneered. "Well—I see it is not so bad as I feared. But I swear to Heaven it is bad enough! Ah! Ah! The Marquis of Saint-Yriac, of all the marquises in France—tyrants, swindlers, deceivers, all, all!" He shook his fists and walked up and down the room. "I would kill him,"

he said, "with as much relish as I bite the head from a radish!"

"Papa," I said, as well as I could for sobbing, "he is not wicked, indeed. He is good and kind——"

"Kind—ah, yes, I dare say, to you!" he stopped in front of me again. "Name of a cannon!" he said, "do you not know the history of your own family? Do you not find that once is enough for the Seigneur of Saint-Yriac to bring misery and ruin upon the name of Poizelle?"

Ah, that sad, mysterious story of my little ancestress . . . of her who had left her eyes and her garden behind for me. . . . I trembled. Had I too, then, brought ruin and disgrace upon the name of Poizelle?

Papa gripped my shoulder, and thrust his face up into mine. "Listen, mademoiselle," he said, "to the trouble that your misconduct has already brought upon you. Here is Octave,

your future husband, coming to his father and to me this morning, swearing that he will never marry you. How he has learned of your objectionable behavior, Heaven knows! but it is sufficiently plain that he understands everything, for what other reason could he have for refusing you as his wife? You, the heiress of Perfumery Poizelle!"

Ah, that splendid Octave! In spite of my grief and terror, I smiled a little to find that he had been as good as his word. Papa shook me again, like a bad child, and glared at me in a fury to see my laughter.

"Ah, you find that amusing, to lose the most desirable match in Paris! For I assure you, mademoiselle, that unless you come to your duty quickly, you *will* lose him! His father has engaged to bring him to his senses; I can do no less with you. But remember, that if you go on with this infamous flirtation, you may lose Octave in

good earnest, after all! So this very week we arrange this little affair of the Boussard-Poizelle marriage. To-day you may stay in your room. And now——"

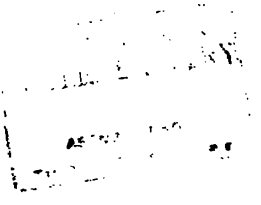
He began to breathe hard, and his face turned blue again. A gold and white chair stood by him—a pretty little chair. "Name of a *name!*" shouted papa, and seizing the little chair he shook it high in the air for a moment, then brought it down on the floor with a bang that sent the four gilt legs splintering over the room.

"Oh, papa!" I ran into a corner trembling. "Now," he said, grinning, "I am ready to go and settle accounts with monseigneur, the Marquis of Saint-Yriac!"

So he stamped out of the room, slamming the door behind him and locking it with a great deal of noise. Ah, he need not have done that; I would not have run away.



"Name of a *name!*" shouted papa.



I don't remember much about that day. It was very long and quiet, except when they all came home to lunch, and there were touf-toufs and voices and laughter under my window. They all sounded very gay, especially Madame Rondolé. I felt like an outcast, a wicked little criminal, locked upstairs there in my room.

Auntie came in with my lunch, very quiet and severe. She made me take some medicine which she said Madame Boussard had prescribed for me,—though auntie said it was more than I deserved. That was dreadful, indeed, for it was very nasty, that medicine! I could not eat much lunch, so then auntie went away and locked my door again. I could hear Hazel in her room, moving around as she dressed for luncheon—so quick she dashes about her room, I had to smile a little as I listened. And I knew just how neat and fresh she would look when she was done.

The afternoon was very hot and very long. I watched them all stream off in the two automobiles, going to the Golf Club, I knew; for Octave's tonneau was filled up with bags of clubs, and Madame Rondolé wore her last new hat from Paris.

They disappeared like a flash among the laburnums and almond trees. I sat in my window and looked up at the forest, and thought of my garden. The hours went by; I could hear the cuckoo sing them off, one by one, in the clock in the rococo drawing-room beneath me.

The shadows began to lengthen. I said to myself, "This time yesterday, I was sitting with the Marquis in my garden." And I put my hand softly over my cheek — the cheek that he had kissed. . . .

It seemed to me that so much had happened to me, I could not really be myself any more. I went to the mir-

ror and looked in at myself—just the same, a little paler, perhaps, and my eyes larger and brighter than usual, but nothing else to show what I had been through. It seemed curious, and a little disappointing, too.

Oh, the time went slowly! I began to feel as though I should go crazy, sitting there without anything to do, but to think of yesterday. . . .

So I took my hair out of its braids, and combed it loose, and began to try to do it up as Hazel had done it, that day a month ago. My hands were so jerky, I tore half the hair from my head—but I puffed and twisted and put in hair-pins and combs. It did not seem to matter much whether I got it right or not, but still, it was something to do.

When it was finished I went and pulled the white muslin dress from the closet — Hazel's white dress, that I had worn that day, and which had

hung in my wardrobe ever since. The dear dress, so fluffy and soft, so full of memories! . . . I felt old, quite old, as I saw the faint green stains along the edge of the ruffles—the grass of my garden, oh, so long, long ago!

So I put the dress on, all fitted and pinned in place; I had plenty of time, oh, lots of time! Then I sat down by the window and pretended—but I didn't need any more to pretend that I was the Queen of France, or anybody but just myself—myself, when I had worn this dress before, when I had stood by the fountain and the Marquis looked at me half-frightened, and then smiled at me. . . .

I went to my drawer and took out the flowers that Mother Jobard had sent me, and Guy had brought to me. They were withered and dry now, but the leaves still smelled sweet. It was true, then, what Johanne had said,—

these flowers were the flowers of love . . . "Brief joy, and life-long pain"!

They came in from their ride, all very gay, and sat down on the piazza, tinkling the cups over the *five-o'clock*. Pretty soon the door unlocked and Johanne came in—dear old Johanne, so red and square and comfortable. I was ready to cry for joy, when I saw her.

But she jumped back and crossed herself—poor old Johanne! "Mademoiselle," she whispered, "sitting there all in white, with the dead flowers in her lap . . . mademoiselle!"

I laughed a little. "No, I am not a ghost, I am only Joujou," I said to her—then I remembered how I had used those same words to the Marquis, the last time I had worn this dress, and I could not speak any more.

Johanne came in softly, and began fussing about and tidying up the room—asking questions about my headache and pitying me for losing such a

beautiful day, and all. But pretty soon I began to notice, she was very important and mysterious—bristling all over with some news she wanted to tell. It seemed too bad to disappoint her, poor old Johanne. So I said:

"What has happened, Johanne?"

"Ah, mademoiselle!" She came up to me, so delighted. "It seems, mademoiselle, that justice has been done at last. I tell you the tale as I heard it just now from the chauffeur of monsieur your papa." . . . Johanne stopped to simper a little, and looked so coy, I suppose she likes the chauffeur very much.

"Well, Johanne?"

"You see, mademoiselle, this morning, as monsieur your papa turned the corner above the village, in his automobile, who should he meet riding along on horseback but the Marquis of Saint-Yriac—the wicked one of whom mademoiselle has already heard!"

"Ah, Johanne!"

"Well, then, mademoiselle, he had the kindness, this haughty son of an infamous race, to stop your papa as he slowed up to turn the curve. He had the condescension to speak to a Poizelle, this great seigneur!" Johanne turned crimson with her sarcasm, and I shook her arm to make her hurry up.

"What then, Johanne?"

"Then, mademoiselle! as the chauffeur tells me, the Marquis said, 'Monsieur Poizelle, will——' but he had no time to finish his sentence, for your papa, mademoiselle, thinking of the cow and all the thousand wrongs of his race, gave a roar like a bull in the forest. 'Go to the devil!' he said, just like that. Then, mademoiselle, he seized the wheel of the automobile —just like that—and started up full speed, straight at the Marquis and the horse. The horse shied to one

side"—— Johanne was jumping around all the time, showing me just how all this happened, but I couldn't notice that.

"What then, what then, Johanne?"

"Why, mademoiselle, the horse swerved so hard, and so quick, that the saddle split in two beneath the Marquis. The horse slipped and went down with his rider. And the last thing the chauffeur saw, he says, as he turned the corner, was the horse galloping home up the hill with the broken saddle dangling at his heels, and the Marquis lying dead upon the rocks."

"Dead, Johanne!"

"Quite still, no better than dead, at all events. Think, mademoiselle, what a splendid victory for Poizelle, the son of a peasant, over his wicked seigneur!"

Johanne breathed quick, her face was red—she looked wild and savage, just as she had done that first day that we came to Saint-Yriac. But now——

Guy was dead, or no better than dead, and it was all my fault—all my fault, from the beginning.

"Mademoiselle will have her dinner now, yes?"

"No, Johanne, I want nothing to eat."

"But, mademoiselle——"

"Johanne, go away! If you talk to me any more I shall go crazy, I think!"

So Johanne went away and left me alone. She locked the door after her, very softly — as though I cared. I had been a very, very wicked girl, disobedient and sly. And now it was somebody else who had to suffer for it. Oh, if it was true, if he was really dead!

Hazel came up to her room, whistling. She took off her shoes—the heavy golf-shoes; I knew them by the thumps they made as she flung them down,—first one, then the other. Then

she pulled bureau drawers out and banged them and closed them again. I wondered what she was going to put on. . . .

The Marquis lying on the rocky road, quite still, and the horse galloping away with that wicked broken saddle. That was all that I could see. It was very strange, but I didn't cry; I couldn't cry a bit.

Behind the closed door Hazel began to splash the water about. How I wished that it was not locked, that door! Not that it mattered how I felt, but I felt so little and so sad, and Hazel is so kind and strong.

There was a tap on the door—the door leading into Hazel's room. "Come!" I said. The key turned in the lock. Ah, they had forgotten that key, after all. And in came Hazel, fresh and smiling, with her long brown hair falling over her pale blue *négligé*.

"How is my poor little dear?" she said, and then, "Oh!" as she stood staring at me. "I thought you were lying down on your bed," she said, laughing, "and then when I saw you sitting there all in white, with those dead flowers in your lap, as though you were going to play Ophelia . . . good gracious!—except I am sure that Ophelia never looked half as beautiful as you!"

I did not speak. "Joujou," she said, "am I disturbing you? I didn't dare to come in before, they said you were so miserable." . . . I raised my eyes and looked at her.

"Joujou!" she cried. "Joujou, what has happened?"

She threw herself on her knees by my side, and flung her kind arms around me — I couldn't help it, I began to cry.

"Dear little Joujou, what is the matter?"

How comforting it was to have her there by me! So, though it was hard to talk, I told her the whole thing, all about the wicked Saint-Yriacs, and how papa hated them; all about the Marquis and the garden, and yesterday and to-day, and everything.

"So your papa would not let you marry him, this young marquis?"

"Marry him? Oh, Hazel, he says that I am disgraced that I have even talked to him!"

Hazel shook her head in a puzzled way. "It is strange! Because, from what people say of him, he seems to be everything that he should be,—and a little more! A little bit reserved, they say, but so clever, so reliable, so kind, and then a marquis—a real marquis! That's something, you know!"

"Yes, but you see, papa doesn't think so!"

"It is strange, for Monsieur de Castaignac is never done talking of

the Marquis, and singing his praises. And even Octave——"

She stopped short and blushed a little. Dear Hazel!

"That makes no difference with papa," I said.

"Then it is just the old-time tradition, this prejudice against the family, that prevents you from marrying the man you love, the man that everybody says is perfectly worthy of you, who could give you a splendid position and make you perfectly happy besides!"

She jumped to her feet. "It's unreasonable all around," she said, "to let everything be spoiled this way, by a few old ghost stories out of the past. Now in America——"

"In America you may marry whom you like—you told me so. But, oh," I said, "what does it matter after all, when he is all broken to pieces on the rocks . . . or dying, or dead?"

I jumped to my feet and began to walk up and down the room. "I can't bear it any more," I cried; "I have got to see him. I must ask him to forgive me; I must find out if he is alive or dead!"

Hazel started, and looked at me very seriously. "Joujou," she said, "I have no business to interfere. I am doing wrong, I know, but I'll risk it. Joujou, I will send down word that I have a headache and cannot go down to dinner. Then I will slip up through the woods to the garden, and peep around the chateau. I'll get some news, more good news for you, you poor little suffering baby!"

"I will go with you," I said.

"No, no, it's not right!"

"They locked me in," I cried; "they did not trust me. I have a right to run away for a few moments if I choose!"

Hazel shook her head. "I don't know," she said; "I am not doing

right by your father, I suppose. But, oh, it all seems so cruel, so unreasonable! It can't be anything wrong, for me to help you out, just a little."

"No, indeed," I cried.

Hazel paused for a moment. "There's one thing," she said, with a little catch in her breath; "whatever motive I have—it's not for myself; no, believe me, dear! whatever reason I have——"

"Of course not, dear Hazel," I cried. "And now, let's hurry, let's hurry!"

So Hazel rang and sent her message downstairs, that her head ached so badly that she did not want any dinner, and would stay in her room for that evening. "A nice fib!" she said, as she twisted up her hair; "but it can't be helped now, I suppose."

Pretty soon we heard the people coming out of their rooms and going down to dinner. Auntie knocked at Hazel's door, and sympathized with her; I was afraid that she would come

into my room, but she didn't. She went straight downstairs, and pretty soon they were clattering forks and clinking glasses, down in the dining-room.

Hazel opened the door again. "Come, Joujou," she whispered. So we stole down the back stairs, very quietly, two ghosts all in white.

The servants were busy in the kitchen, so we passed softly through the side corridors and the long out-houses beyond. I was trembling; I was afraid of what was going to happen, of what we were going to hear and see. Yet I was strong, too, stronger than I had ever been before in my life! And more than all, I had Hazel with me.

As we passed by the empty pantry, I saw, perched on the flour barrel, the white and red soup-tureen that had been at the bottom of all the trouble, from the beginning—the tureen and

Madame Rondolé, together. I could not touch *her*, to be sure! But as I went by, I swept the tureen to the ground, eggs and all, crash! and there was an end to it.

"Hush, why did you do that!" cried Hazel, under her breath.

I did not answer. I took her hand and began to run. It was nearly sunset as we stepped into the woods, and crept around to the further side of the house, where we could run up the hillside to the garden.

Everything was very still as we crept around the boxwood hedge and walked down the little mossy path that led to the fountain. There was no one in the garden, that was plain, and the pavilion was empty. "Empty, but not alone," said Hazel, with a little shiver. "Ah, you can feel them thick around you in this place, the ghosts of the beautiful old past!"

"But, oh, Hazel, he is not here—he must be dead after all!"

"Nonsense!" cried Hazel; "why should he be here at all, when one thinks of it—after what happened yesterday?"

"I don't know, Hazel. But, oh, if I could be sure!"

Everything was very quiet and still; the woods were shadowy around us, and the queer old statues looked very gray and silent. . . . Suddenly, from behind the trees, high up on the top of the hill, came a far-away sound, the slow, measured tinkling of a cow-bell.

"Hark!" cried Hazel.

"It is just the cow of the old Mother Jobard," I said, "being driven home at sunset."

Hazel thought for a moment. "The old Mother Jobard?" she said; "the Marquis's servant, is she not? Very well, then. Now we go up the hill to ask her for news of her master!"

"Hazel, how clever, how good you are!" I cried. And we caught up our clinging muslin skirts around us, as we flew up the hill among the trees, then along by the tall fence of paling till we came to the rocky crest where Johanne and I had so often looked over at the chateau—where we had looked over the fence and talked of the wicked old Marquis, oh, weeks and months ago! when we had first come to Saint-Yriac.

There was the chateau above us, just as before; dark, high, and silent, with the yellow sunlight on the towers and the green grass growing in the moat. This was his home, my dear Guy; it didn't look very comfortable! Was he in there now, behind those tall black walls? and, oh, was he alive or dead?

"The wild old place," said Hazel softly. "It makes me tremble when I look at it." So we stood very quietly looking over the wall, not knowing exactly what to do. All he time, the

tinkling of the bell was growing nearer; and suddenly from behind the rocks on the other side of the castle, winding up the steep path that led along the precipice, appeared the horns of a cow, and the blue woollen kerchief of the old Mother Jobard. They came climbing up very slowly, cow and old woman, up to the drawbridge across the moat, just above the fence where we stood.

"Madame!" cried Hazel, very politely. "Good-evening, madame."

Mother Jobard looked up, wild and fierce. "Is she there?" she said, in her gruff voice like a man's. "I knew she would come. It could not happen otherwise."

So she came trotting over to the fence, guiding the cow with the green willow switch that she held in her hand.

"Mother Jobard!" I cried. "Please tell me how he is—oh, is he still alive?"

"Yes, he is still alive," she answered, wagging her head, while the cow smelled us through the fence and Hazel shrank back with an "Ouch!"

"Tell me, please! Did you find him this morning, did you bring him home?"

She hesitated a moment, then looked up again sharp and quick. "After he had had the meeting with your papa, mademoiselle? Yes, I have heard of that—and I myself, mademoiselle, I brought him home!"

"Ah!" I was relieved to hear that, at least. "But, oh, Mother Jobard, how is he now?"

I thought I had never seen her eyes look darker or stranger or more mysterious—and I doubled up my fingers, as Johanne had told me. "Mademoiselle," she said slowly, "can you bear the truth?"

"Yes, yes!" I clung to the fence to support myself.

"Mademoiselle, his head, left arm, the bones of his side—*bon Dieu du bois!* what can you expect when the saddle breaks, and the rider is hurled upon the rocks? I find then that he is something of a savage, your little papa. But as for my poor master—the injury to the head is the worst."

Hazel put her arms about me to steady me, and I heard her voice saying, "But the doctor—what does the doctor say?"

"The doctor, mademoiselle? Bah, I snap my fingers at them, your doctors!" and she cracked her great brown knuckles. "No, if he is to live, my poor master, it will be through me, the old Mother Jobard, with her good herbs and her ancient spells!"

"Goodness gracious," cried Hazel, "this is horrible—we must do something, that's certain!"

Mother Jobard grinned, the least bit in the world—dreadful old woman!

"Ah, you mock yourself of my skill! —that is amusing, but you see he is my master, and now he is in my keeping."

We stood there all three, very silent, while the cow pulled bits of grass from between the palings of the fence.

"We must do something for him," said Hazel again, "there is no doubt about that."

Mother Jobard looked up again, with a flash of those deep old eyes. "Do something for him, mademoiselle,—shall I tell you what you can do?"

"Yes, yes!" I cried, stretching my hands out over the fence, while the tears ran down my face.

"Mademoiselle, as I told you, the worst injury is to his head. He raves in delirium—as sick men will, he babbles continually of what lies deepest in his heart. Shall I tell you, mademoiselle, what name has been all day on his lips?"

"Tell me, tell me!"

"Can you ask, mademoiselle? Your name! 'My angel, my adored one, my beautiful Joujou!' he cries, 'come to me, *chérie,* or I shall die!'"

I fell limp against Hazel's arm. He was dying, my dear Guy, all through my fault, and he wanted me. "Hazel, what shall I do, Hazel? He wants me!"

Hazel paused for a moment, holding me close to her. "Is he really so sick, madame?"

"*Bon Dieu du bois!*" answered Mother Jobard; "of that only God can speak with certainty. I tell you only of what I have seen and heard. But while he chafes so continually for what he cannot have, it is hard to say what the end of it will be," and she touched the cow with her willow switch. "I must hurry back to him, my poor young master," she said.

"No, Mother Jobard, wait a moment!" cried Hazel; then she

hesitated. "You really think it would help your master to get well, to see Mademoiselle Joujou for an instant?"

"Mademoiselle, I have known men brought back from death's door by being given their longing—a piece of cheese, perhaps, or a pickled snail . . . how much more then, the sight of his heart's desire!"

"Ah, Hazel!" I whispered, "then you think we might go to him . . . for just a moment?"

"Joujou, it is hard to say. We oughtn't to have come, we ought not to go further—of course. But still, here is a young man dangerously hurt, lying helpless without proper attendance. Suppose he were to die, and nothing done for him but herbs and spells—Joujou, I don't care, we couldn't abandon a dog to die this way! It's our duty to go in there and see what can be done for him, and then go and telephone for a surgeon and nurses from

Dieppe. Who cares what people think or say of us? When it comes to a life to be saved, nothing else is of very much account!"

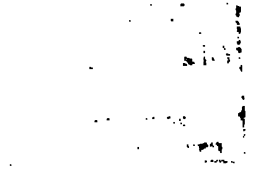
How big and strong and determined she looked as she stood there and spoke straight out—my splendid Hazel! I felt myself strong, too, as I looked at her. "You are right, Hazel," I cried, "we will do our duty; we will go, as you say!"

"Ah, mademoiselle!" said Mother Jobard, with a pious smile, "he will reward you for this, the good God. Here—you cannot climb this tall fence. But see! a little lower down, these palings that I made loose so that monseigneur the Marquis might walk in his domain, and visit his garden when he chose." She swung three or four of the palings off to the sides—"Welcome to Saint-Yriac, mesdemoiselles!"

I jumped to the opening, but to my surprise Hazel pulled me back and



"I know it is ridiculous of me, but if there is one thing on earth that I am afraid of, it is a cow!"



stood hesitating, with a little laugh. "Just a moment," she said, "I know it is ridiculous of me, but if there is one thing on earth that I am afraid of, it is a cow!"

Hazel afraid! If I had not been in such distress I could have burst out laughing. Hazel, afraid of a cow! "Hazel, you are joking!" I cried; "come, hurry, please!"

She laughed again, but I could see that she was in earnest. "Not while that cow is loose!" she said.

A sudden gleam came into the eyes of Mother Jobard. "Mademoiselle is right," she said; "the last cow, the cow destroyed—like her master!—by the hard heart of Poizelle, she was an angel for sweetness, she was gentle and good like mademoiselle herself. But this savage beast, with her long horns —bah!"

It seemed rather mean of her to dig it into me in that way about the cow,

as though it were my fault that the last one had been killed. However—"Be quick, be quick!" cried Hazel; "we have only a few moments to stay. Tie up your cow, and let us come as fast as we can."

"As you wish, mademoiselle!" replied Mother Jobard, and cracking the cow with the willow switch, she drove her up the path and across the drawbridge into the castle walls.

"I suppose we are safe now," said Hazel, cautiously; so we gathered up our skirts and slipped through the fence and up the rocky path to the castle. Heavens, how the country fell away from all about us!—the green tree-tops of the forests, the village of Saint-Yriac so tiny and so far below, and the white roads that wound away among the fields to Dieppe. It made me dizzy to look down at them all—so we flew across the narrow drawbridge under the portcullis to the high dark court-yard,

where Mother Jobard was tying her cow to a queer old rusty cannon in one corner.

"I will tie her up tight and strong, the sacred brute!" said she, "or she would kill her very master himself, *bon Dieu du bois*! It was but last month, she gored a boy to death—take care, don't come too near, mademoiselle!"

Hazel stepped along warily. "But aren't you afraid of her yourself, madame?"

"I, mademoiselle? As I told you, I have charms and spells!" She glanced around at us, smiling out of her dark withered eyes. "Now, mademoiselle, you are safe. Come, let me take you to the inner gallery, where you may wait a moment until I have prepared my poor little master for your coming."

So she opened a great, creaking oak door, that swung heavily on its rusty hinges. "This way, my young ladies. Do me the honor to seat yourselves, and in a moment I will return."

So she shut the door carefully again, and went off. The gallery where we found ourselves was very dark and long, with a hollow vaulted roof, and high pannelled wall lined with pictures in queer old battered frames. Even the sunlight looked dark and faint as it came through the grated slits of windows, in dusty crimson streaks; and when we peered out between the bars, we could see the sun just slipping down behind the far-away rim of the Channel.

"See," said Hazel, "it is growing late! Well—we are here now, and it can't be helped. But I hope she won't keep us waiting very long, that old friend of yours!"

She began walking up and down the room, looking at the portraits and all the strange old things in the long gallery. As for me, distressed and troubled as I was, I could not help looking about me—for a castle hall, one doesn't see that every day! "Just

look at this crusader!" said Hazel, in a hushed voice; "see his banner and the cross on his shield, and the canvas that it is painted on, ready to crumble away at a touch. . . . Yes, this place is a thousand years old, I am sure!"

She walked down the hall, and I after her. "See these old suits of armor, Joujou! It can't be wrong for us to look at them, do you think so? See! this banner has 'Fontenoy' on it . . . and see, this shield says 'Agincourt!' Ah!" and she took a long breath. I thought of Alain Chartier and Queen Marguerite, and the tales I had read of those far-off splendid days; it brought them very close to me, when I looked at these rusty swords and the tattered dusty banners, embroidered with the cross and fleur-de-lys, that hung from the dark arches above . . . and the dingy painted faces all about us—the eyes looking at Hazel and me, eyes that had seen

Queen Marguerite herself, perhaps, and Palestine, and the great kings of France.

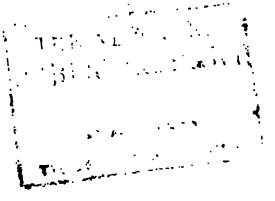
Hazel paused before the tall hollow fireplace. "Look at the arms carved there upon the chimney," she whispered, "in that beautiful faded gold, with the motto I can't read, and the Marquis's coronet above—*De la Tour de Saint-Yriac-Roncesvaulx*. . . . There's a name, Joujou! I tell you, this makes you feel pretty small. An automobile and a million dollars aren't much, are they, beside a name and ancestors like that!"

"She is a long time gone," I said.

Hazel pulled out her watch. "Yes, we are waiting here nearly a quarter of an hour! I had no idea of it. Good gracious, we can't stay very much longer! There, dear little Joujou, I am sure it's all right . . . she will be back in a moment, and he's not so sick, after all. Come, let's look at



"But see, it might be your portrait, almost!"



these portraits again! Here are some splendid ladies. I think they must have been pets of Louis XIV or somebody, they look so pleased with themselves. And these noble gentlemen—it's strange, isn't it now, to see the same look in them all—the same high dark face, again, and again." . . . She paused and studied them. "That strange miracle of blood!" she said. "Your friend, the Marquis, might almost have sat for any one of these portraits, might he not. . . . And see, Joujou, this is the most curious thing . . . this little picture in the corner here in the last ray of daylight . . . just the sketch of a head, faded and the frame broken to pieces. But see, it might be your portrait, almost! Yes, that is very strange, but it certainly does look like you!"

I came slowly down the hall and stood beside her. Ah! I knew who it was, this picture, tucked away in

disgrace in one corner, far away from the noble Saint-Yriacs and their haughty ladies. I remembered the strange story that Johanne had told me, the chance words of the Marquis, the looks and whispers of the old Mother Jobard.

"Your eyes, Joujou," whispered Hazel, "yellow and mysterious like some beautiful Persian cat's . . . your hair and that beautiful creamy skin of yours! Yes, it's strange; it's you . . . and yet it's not you at all!"

I shivered a little as I looked at the face in the picture. There was a link between us, I could feel that; though her face was so much more beautiful than mine, with something in it that was simpering and yet savage, too. The Marquis had said to me, "I have seen your face before." Yes, this was what he had seen! And the sight of this face, which was mine and yet not mine, filled me with a kind of fear—a

new terrible understanding of what little creatures we are in this big blind world, where we are born, and live, and die, without knowing what it all means, or having anything to say about it. She had been unhappy when she lived, this ancestress of mine; and now I had her face, and I was unhappy, too. I felt helpless, somehow, and cold all over.

"Hazel," I said, "we must go home."

Hazel started. "Yes," she answered, "it is nearly eight o'clock. Horrors! we'll be awfully late getting home, and we haven't done any good to anybody, after all."

I felt the tears start into my eyes. "If he should be dead, after all, and she doesn't dare to come back and tell us!"

"No, indeed!" cried Hazel; yet I could see that she was troubled. "That's impossible, dear. But there's one thing certain: we don't sit here any

more, among these old ghosts in the twilight. Here, let's go and see if we can find our old friend Jobard!"

"Can you open the door?" I said.

Hazel frowned a little as she inspected the locks. "That would be a joke on us, indeed!" she said, as she rattled the great iron latch. "Ah!" she breathed in relief as the door swung back, creaking on its hinges. "Here . . . take care of these steps, dear . . . here we are in the court, and there is the drawbridge."

"There is no one here," I said, peering around in the great hollow court, so dim and so empty in the twilight, and silent but for the cow chewing her cud slowly somewhere among the shadows.

Hazel raised her voice. "Madame!" she cried; "Mother Jobard! Madame!"

A little rippling echo ran around the court and we drew closer together.

"Mother Jobard!" I cried in my turn, and my voice sounded unsteady and strange.

"I do not understand it at all!" said Hazel. . . . "I'll tell you. I'll run around and try all those doors, and knock and pound and call once more, and then if we don't get any answer, we will run home as fast as we can. They can hardly have missed us yet, and if they do,—I am ashamed of myself, I can tell you!—but we have just been for a little stroll, haven't we?"

So she flew around the court, rattling the great bolts, and knocking, and crying the name of Mother Jobard. "I feel like Richard Coeur-de-Lion," she said, "bombarding a castle—but I didn't seem to do it as well as he!" She stopped short. "It's no use at all," she said. "I don't know what to think of it, I'm sure!"

She stood puzzling. I thought of my dear Guy, dying and calling for

me. . . . "Must we go home, now?" I asked.

"I am sorry, Joujou, but we certainly must! It seems terrible to leave a sick man in the care of that ignorant old lunatic, but she has left us no choice. To-morrow, perhaps, we can do something, but now it is quite dark. Come, Joujou!"

We hurried over the rough stone floor to the drawbridge, Hazel first and I following. Suddenly Hazel started back with a little scream.

"Oh," she cried, "look! Just look!"

I jumped in terror; I did not know what I should see . . . the Marquis dead, or Mother Jobard. . . . I peered around Hazel. There in the drawbridge under the portcullis, blocking the narrow passage-way, big and dark in the fading light — there lay the cow!

"What shall we do?" cried Hazel, seizing my hand.

"We might jump over her," I suggested timidly.

"Nonsense! Are you crazy, Joujou?"

Just then, as if to settle the matter, the cow scrambled plunging to her feet, and stood looking at us with her head lowered, chewing her cud.

"Look at those eyes," said Hazel, and I felt her hand shiver in mine, "and those great sharp horns, one for each of us. It's funny, I wouldn't mind facing a burglar, or a mouse . . . but a cow! Never!"

"Let's try and drive her away," I said.

"And put her in a fury? . . . well, we must take the risk; we can't stay here all night!" We stooped and groped for stones. "That wretched old woman!" cried Hazel; "why couldn't she tie her cow up tight and sure while she was doing it?"

So we began to bang the pebbles at the cow. It seemed cruel, but we

had to drive her away somehow! She ducked her head and stepped aside. "There she goes!" said Hazel, as she sent a final pebble after her. "*Bon voyage*, my friend!"

But suddenly, just as the cow started to run, she threw up her head and stopped short. Then we saw her halter rope running up above her head — up to the portcullis, where it was knotted fast to one of the iron bars.

"Look!" cried Hazel, "she's tied there, she's tied there!" She stepped back and clutched me with a nervous little laugh. "It looks to me," she said, "as though the joke were on us. Is there any other way out of this place, do you suppose?"

I shook my head, for I had so often studied the castle from the wood below. "No, Hazel," I answered, "there's just the drawbridge; that's the way they built them in those days, you

see. And the moat is thirty feet deep, with a smooth stone wall on each side."

"But, Joujou, we can't stay here; we must get out somehow!"

I hesitated. "Shall we try if we can get past the cow? I will go first . . . yes, I will go first, Hazel."

"You dear little thing! Do you suppose I am going to let you risk your precious life? Remember what she said—it was only last month, that cow gored a boy to death!"

We shrank up together in the corner, close together, in our damp white muslins, in the corner of the court-yard furthest away from those terrible horns. It was quite dark, but we could hear her chewing her cud slowly, and see her eyes glisten as she turned her head.

"Joujou," cried Hazel, "I have an idea! Let's telephone!"

"Oh, Hazel! Where there's a drawbridge, there isn't any telephone!" I

laughed a little and Hazel joined me.

"She has the joke on us, that terrible old woman! Joujou, you understand these people about here. What does she mean, and what does she want?"

"I am sure I don't know, Hazel!"

"She means to keep us here, that's plain. Whether she is here herself or not, or whether the Marquis is here, sick or well—— Joujou, she can't mean to keep us here all night!"

"Oh, Hazel, no, no! Come, let's try to get past the cow!"

Hazel clutched me. "My dear child, this is all my fault, and I feel responsible for you, you see! You shall stay right here by me. It's better to be made a fool of and scolded in the morning than to be gored to death like that poor boy we heard of —isn't it?"

I shrank up close to Hazel—what she had said was too true to be denied. She put her kind arm around

me and we sat there together in the darkness, with all our fears and anxieties around us, while the moments went by and the cow chewed her cud in the darkness under the portcullis.

XV.

"IT is strange," I said, "that no one comes!"

"They'll come, sure enough!" said Hazel. "Perhaps they are hunting for us now, your father and . . . and . . . perhaps, Octave!"

"Ah!" I said.

"Don't worry," she said; "Octave will find us, I am sure of that! There's nothing he can't do, is there?"

"No, indeed," I answered; though Octave, you know, he isn't like Guy! Ah, poor Guy! where was he now?

Hazel gave me a little squeeze. "The joke is on Madame Rondolé, anyway, the horrid little tale-bearer! See—she brought Monsieur de Cas-

taignac over here to the Villa Clematis from Dieppe, to make me stop thinking about Octave Boussard. But instead of that, Castaignac did nothing but tell me of his wonderful friend, the Marquis, and how much everybody thought of him—and that made me resolve at last, you see, that it was my duty to help you about him, in every way I could, and—— Ah, poor Octave! I needn't let my conscience stand in the way any more, need I, dear?"

"Oh, Hazel! You are going to marry Octave?"

She laughed, a little consciously. "I didn't say that, did I, dear?"

"But, Hazel, it is growing late! And that dreadful cow . . . and poor Guy, calling for me." . . . I couldn't help it, I began to cry. Hazel stroked my hair and soothed me, so that I felt ashamed of myself that I could not be as strong as she.

Everything was black around us, except for the stars that shone through the arches of the court; far at the foot of a cliff we could hear the little hollow murmuring of the sea, and the cow ground her cud softly in the darkness of the drawbridge.

Suddenly — "Hark!" cried Hazel. From below us in the darkness came the faint ringing of a hoof upon the rocks. We jumped to our feet. The sound was coming up the hill, beyond a doubt—the heavy beat of a horse's iron shoes. We sat listening, waiting, not daring to breathe, while the steps came nearer . . . nearer.

I clutched Hazel. "Someone is coming—it's papa—oh, Hazel!"

"Your father on horseback? Nonsense, Joujou! Listen!" . . . We tiptoed our way through the darkness of the court-yard to the open arches overlooking the pathway. Below us on the hill-side we could see nothing, but

there was a clanking of hoofs and flying of sparks in the darkness.

"If it is Octave," whispered Hazel, "he will call our names." . . .

The hoofs came clattering along . . . we could hear the spurs and stirrups jingling, and the horse breathing in long puffs as he came laboring up the side of the precipice. Suddenly the rider began to whistle. "If he whistles ragtime," murmured Hazel, "we'll know it's Octave, and we will call him. . . . Listen! . . . No, it's an air I never heard before. . . . No, it can't be Octave!"

I trembled as I leaned over the stone railing with Hazel; it seemed to me that my heart stopped beating, as I remembered all the terrible old tales that I had heard since my coming to Saint-Yriac. For the whistled air that came to me from the darkness, shrill and faint like the echo of some disembodied wandering tune . . . it was my

little song of Victor Hugo, the song that I had sung to the Marquis in the garden the day before!

"Hazel," I whispered, "it's Guy!"

Hazel started, with a sudden shiver that frightened me. "The Marquis? It's impossible!"

We clutched each other and listened. The rider was just below us, on the other side of the moat. "Steady!" cried a voice, and the horse stopped short with a snort; "be careful, now, my friend—here, steady, steady!"

"Hazel!" I whispered, "it's Guy's voice!" . . . Guy, alive or dead, that was his voice! "Hazel," I whispered, "do you suppose that he is . . . alive?"

Hazel broke from me with a relieved little laugh. "Nonsense!" she said; "*he's* all right, that's one thing certain!"

The horse's steps came trampling hollow over the drawbridge. My dear Guy, alive, coming to me—all of a

sudden I remembered. "Hazel! he doesn't know what's there — he'll be gored to death!"

I started forward, but Hazel seized my arm. "Well, that's no reason why *you* should be!" she said; and raising her voice, she cried, "Stop, monsieur! Whoa—stop!"

There was a wild snort from the horse and a pounding clatter of hoofs and stirrup, mixed-up and wild, from the drawbridge. Then came the least little silence, while the horse breathed hard.

"Who goes there?" said the Marquis's voice, just like that, quick and sharp and a little troubled. Poor Guy! it was his turn now to be afraid of the ghosts of this old haunted place. I remembered what he had told me of how superstitious he was . . . I did not stop to ask myself what the mistake had been, or how he happened to be riding up to his castle,— he, the

dying man. He was troubled, poor Guy! so I leaned out far into the darkness.

"I'm not a ghost!" I cried; "only Joujou!"

"Joujou!" his voice came back in a horrified, shocked kind of tone. "*Who's there?*"

"Monsieur!" said Hazel, very dignified, "in one moment we will explain —but now, please be careful. That dreadful savage cow of Mother Jobard's is tied right there in the drawbridge. That's the reason *we* can't get across, you see!"

"And, oh, please, you mustn't either!" I cried.

"What in the world is this!" said the Marquis, in a helpless, resigned sort of way. Then he slid from his saddle, with a jump that rang on the bridge, and after a moment, *crac!* a match blazed out sputtering and cheerful. There he was for the flash of an

instant . . . himself, undamaged, alive, his hand clutching the bridle of his horse. "Where is this dangerous beast?" he said, glaring along the drawbridge. . . . "Bah! the cow, mademoiselle? That sacred type of an ancient lamb! Here, out of the way, you brute!" He scratched another match. . . . "*Sapristi!* she is tied here — what does this mean? Here, my friend, this is where you are turned loose from the halter. And now—go along with you!"

His hand came down, smack! on the cow's back, and she came plunging along through the dark. Hazel shrank close up to me. "Oh, monsieur!" she said.

"Do not be alarmed, mademoiselle. I assure you, the creature is as mild as her own milk! . . . and now . . . my head is turning—Joujou, is this really you? Where are you? Is it really you?"

"Light a lantern for us, please!" begged Hazel. "Don't you see, we must go home immediately!"

"One instant, mademoiselle!" He fumbled for a moment under the arches; then the match sputtered again, blue and flaring, as the Marquis touched the wick of an old iron lantern that hung by a chain just at the entrance of the court. It was all dark, and hollow, and mysterious; with the cow in one corner, the horse in another; and in the centre Hazel, pale in her white dress, and the Marquis staring at us with his eyes wide open, trying to bow and appear quite polite and unconcerned.

"Mesdemoiselles, you do me too much honor! I hope you have suffered no inconvenience, here in this wild fortress of mine?" The lantern swung gently back and forth above his head, and I could see his face, ruddy and clear as ever, except for a

dark purplish lump just above the left temple.

"We heard that you were dying!" I cried.

"What!" he exclaimed, bewildered.

"Monsieur," said Hazel, quite calm and quick, "we must go instantly! But first . . . you see, we are here because your servant, that wretched crazy old woman, assured us that you had been almost killed in that automobile accident this morning—and she begged and implored us to come and see you, as the only means of saving your life!"

The Marquis looked at me, as she spoke; I felt his eyes on me, keen and smiling. "You came to me, Joujou? You heard that I needed you, and you came? That was good of you, indeed!"

"Monsieur!" cried Hazel, "you may be able to account for her behavior, but indeed it is beyond me. Here you are, unhurt and well; and

here we have been shut up here alone, prisoners, for hours and hours — and you say that the cow is not even cross at all!"

The Marquis turned around, severe and frowning. "This is Mother Jobard's doings? I swear to you, I do not understand!" He started suddenly, and it seemed to me that he flushed, in the dim lantern light. "Name of a name!" he said, half to himself; "who would have believed that the old wretch had such audacity? . . . Mesdemoiselles, in every case, I assure you that she shall be punished as she deserves, this wretched old woman. And now . . . what reparation can I make to you, for your kindness which has been so miserably abused? How can I ever implore your pardon?"

"That can wait, monsieur!" cried Hazel impatiently; "and now, please help us to get home!"

"Mademoiselle, every service that is in my power! First, let me unhook this old lantern, and replace the slide, so that we may have some light to guide us." . . .

"Oh!" I cried, "you are well, you are not hurt after all?"

He looked up smiling, and the lantern light flashed white on his teeth. "Mademoiselle, only a trifling scratch, as you see . . . the fault of that infamous saddle, which betrayed me! But *sapristi!* It is plain, at least, that he does not love me, monsieur your papa!"

"I am so glad!" I murmured.

"Be quick, monsieur!" cried Hazel.

"Mademoiselle, one instant only." He struggled with the rusty latch of the lamp. "*Mon Dieu!*" he said, half to himself; "is it possible then that I am not dreaming—when I come home to this empty fortress and find two lovely spirits, white and vaporous?"

Mon Dieu, those poor white muslins, draggled and damp with the dew! I shivered, and Hazel cried again, "Not spirits—very real, and waiting to get home!"

The Marquis swung the lantern in his hand. "Ready at last—and I assure you, mademoiselle, you will find that we have need of it, before you get down the hill."

Hazel turned and flew to the drawbridge, and I after her; but all of a sudden—

"*Bigre!*" said the Marquis, through his teeth; "what was that?"

Just below us there was a voice . . . far below, faint, and yet clear, too. "Name of a cannon!" said the voice; and then we heard the sound of feet on the rocks.

The blood seemed to turn backward in my veins. "It's papa," I said, in a little weak voice that sounded strange to my ears. Hazel caught my arm.

The Marquis leaned over the drawbridge, peering about him with the lantern into the empty blackness beneath. "There is a light below," he said. "There! it has vanished behind a rock. . . . There it is again!"

"It's papa, coming for me," I said again, and I remembered what he had said to me this morning, and his eyes, how they had looked at me. . . .

The Marquis bent over, listening. "The steps are coming nearer," he said, very quietly; "there is no doubt about that! Mademoiselle, what do you wish to do?"

"Isn't there time for me to run away?" I asked; for I was thinking, you see, of papa's eyes. *Mon Dieu!* I did not dare to face them again. I would rather die. I could hear the steps, heavy and slipping dry on the stone . . . nearer, and nearer. . . .

"No," cried Hazel, "you shall not run away! You have done nothing to

be ashamed of! Why should you hide from anybody?"

There was a rattle and clatter of stones, down in the blackness below us. "*Jove!*" cried a voice, far below but so clear that I jumped again, and then I saw that Hazel was turned white, too. "That's Octave's voice," she said, softly—and then—"No, I won't run away; we'll stand to our guns, both of us, Joujou!"

Suddenly the Marquis turned from where he stood on the drawbridge, and came back to us with the lantern in his hand, his head held very high and determined.

"Mesdemoiselles," he said, "there is no doubt that people are coming up the path to the chateau! I would rather cut off my hand than know that I had been the means of placing you in so false a situation. But at least . . . there is one thing that I can do—one point that I can place beyond

doubt or suspicion!" He paused a moment, and his eyes shone in the lantern light—his eyes, looking straight at me. Below us, the steps crept clattering up the side of the precipice, nearer, and nearer.

"Mademoiselle Joujou," he said, "I do not know whether Mademoiselle Walker knows the nature of the sentiments with which I have the honor to regard you. . . . Mademoiselle, I lay at your feet my most respectful homages, my tenderest devotion. Mademoiselle, I have the honor to ask your hand in marriage!"

He took a step toward me. Everything was whirling about me, just as it had done that day—that last day in the garden. "Oh, Guy!" I heard myself whisper softly. . . . The steps were quite near, now; and I could hear papa's breath puffing, heavy and quick, somewhere below on that dark hill-side. "Oh, Guy!" I said.

"Mademoiselle, in justice to you, let me make myself clear! I offer you my heart and my name — but alas! what else have I to give? This bare, poverty-stricken old heap of stones! All the property of my family is gone —I do not disguise it from you. For myself, I can live on my pay. But— oh, *mon Dieu*, what ought I to do?" he cried, turning to Hazel. "Mademoiselle, I appeal to you! As you know, the prejudices of Monsieur Poizelle are bitter. After this morning, I cannot conceal from myself that he would rather die than give his daughter to me!" He touched his bruised temple with his finger, and smiled a little proud, troubled smile.

"Ah, monsieur——" cried Hazel softly, and squeezed my arm in her own.

"Mademoiselle, listen! Would it be fair, would it be the part of an honorable gentleman for me to ask this dear

child to desert her family, to break with her father and all the advantages of fortune which he can give her—to become the wife of a penniless soldier—a marquise in lodgings, patching her last year's clothes!" He laughed, a little bitterly. "You see, I am frank! . . . And then, if there should be a war . . . if I should be forced to leave her all alone in France——" he turned, and walked up and down the court, with his face hidden in the shadows. "And yet . . . my dear, dear little Joujou!"

"Monsieur, I think——" began Hazel,—and then, all of a sudden, "*Hola! Hola* there, I say!" came papa's voice, roaring from the other side of the drawbridge. I leaned on Hazel's arm; I could not answer a word.

The Marquis picked up his lantern again, and walked slowly to the great gate, under the bars of the portcullis. "Who goes there?" he said.

"Humph?" said papa's voice, taken aback for an instant; then, "Is that you, monsieur the Marquis?"

"It is I, Saint-Yriac," responded the Marquis, very calm and polite; then, just like a drawing-room, "To whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"Humph . . . well, my name is Poizelle," said papa, "a name you know, I think? And I came here to ask—have you seen anything of my daughter?"

Poor papa! his voice was quite weary and troubled. I thought of all those long hours that he had been waiting, and that desperate hard climb up the precipice. . . . "Oh, papa!" I cried. "Here I am, papa!"

Papa made a noise, wild and queer, and then he dashed along across the drawbridge, a little electric lantern in his hand and his face pale and drawn and strange. "Joujou!" he said, "we've been hunting—we've been hunting for

hours, Octave and I!" He seized my arm in his hand, so that I really cried out with the pain. "We miss you from your rooms—we hear from the servants an alarm of breaking china, of two white shapes that flitted past—we find you nowhere. Ah, what we have feared!"

The soup-tureen! Yes, even smashed to bits, it had worked to betray me! Papa paused and looked at me. "Ano so, Joujou, this is where I find you!" he said, slowly. "Ah . . . perhaps it would have been better to find you . . . at the foot of the cliff, after all!"

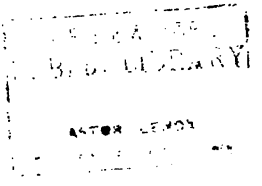
Hazel started forward. "Monsieur Poizelle," she cried, "don't blame Joujou! You mustn't, indeed. It's all my fault that she is here—all my fault; you must blame me!"

"Name of a dog!" shouted papa; "I am not at a loss, I think, for blame for either of you! To be found at this

hour, past ten o'clock, alone in the dwelling of a young man—and that young man the most evil of aristocrats! Yes, monsieur!"—he whirled around to the Marquis, who stood so tall above him, grave and pale, with the lantern in his hand—the poor old rusty iron lantern, it looked very shabby and flickering beside papa's beautiful white electric tube!—"yes, monsieur, you see I do not mince matters!" cried papa, glaring and breathing hard; and I saw the strange little flecks of purple come dark into his face. "The most corrupt of aristocrats!" he cried again. "Name of a dog! one would think, from your way of doing things, that the old days had returned again, with all the infamous rights of the seigneur. Ah! Ah! You would flirt with my daughter, would you? You would steal her from me, would you? Name of a cannon! I have the honor to inform monseigneur the Marquis that he is a hun-



"I have the honor to inform monseigneur the Marquis that he is a hundred years too late."



dred years too late, and this time his plans have failed!"

The Marquis looked down at him, very white and still. "Then I am to understand, monsieur, that you refuse to listen to me, if I tell you that I love your daughter?"

Oh, how nobly he said it! What would papa's answer be? I knew, before he had opened his lips. "So the Marquis loves my daughter!" he said, with a kind of laugh. "Yes, once before this, a hundred years or more, it happened that the great Seigneur of Saint-Yriac honored a humble little Poizelle with his love—and, name of a name! that once was quite enough. And now, Octave is waiting. Joujou, come home!"

He seized my hand. The Marquis bowed low, but I saw his lip quiver, the least little bit in the world. "Mademoiselle, do not forget what I said to you, will you? And now, forgive me, and good-by!"

"Good-by, Guy," I answered; papa was pulling me down to the drawbridge, and the tears were running down my face. "Indeed, I will never forget. Good-by!"

All of a sudden Hazel sprang forward. "Monsieur, one moment!" She began to laugh a little, nervously, and papa turned and glared at her. "What is it that you find so amusing, Miss Walker, may I ask?"

"I beg your pardon!" cried Hazel, "but, don't you see, I don't believe that you two gentlemen quite understand each other!" The Marquis turned quick and sharp; papa paused, and I held my breath for Hazel to speak, as she stood there smiling, in her white dress, facing us all.

"It's too ridiculous—I don't know just how to put it. Monsieur Poizelle, it's not the Marquis, but you, who are a hundred years behind the time!" She burst out laughing again.

"Don't you see, he's just asking you if he can m-m-marry Joujou!"

Papa let my arm slip from his hand, and his jaw dropped as he stared at the Marquis.

"What . . . what?" he said; "you are asking my daughter's hand in *marriage?* Thousand devils! Then why didn't you say so?"

Guy let the lantern fall with a crash and a clatter, as he sprang forward. The pool of oil flared up and made a wild red glare over the old court-yard, and over the Marquis's face and papa's as they stood facing each other.

"'Say so?'" cried Guy. "What else, monsieur, did you suppose could be my intention?"

Papa still stared at him, while the purple slowly faded from his face. "Marriage — serious intentions? No trifling, no deceit? The Seigneur of Saint-Yriac asks the daughter of Poizelle in marriage?"

The Marquis bowed low. "Monsieur, I have that honor!"

Papa rubbed his forehead with his hand, in a bewildered sort of way. "Certainly—what could I have been thinking of? They are absurd, those old tales of the past—of a foolishness to cut with a knife! Name of a dog! Are we not all equal nowadays? . . . And yet . . . the Seigneur!"

He stood staring from me to Guy, and from Guy to me. I did not dare to speak, but stood waiting. . . .

"Monsieur!" demanded Guy, "your answer?"

"Name of a name of a *name!*" shouted papa. "My answer? . . . I consent, monsieur the Marquis, I consent!"

"Ah!" cried Hazel; "dear Joujou, how glad I am!" and she threw her arms around my neck and kissed me warmly. Dear Hazel! Guy walked up to me, very grave and sedate, but

with something sparkling deep in his eyes that seemed to warm me through. "Mademoiselle——" he said, when he took my hand and bent over it and kissed it, just as he had done in the garden, that first day of all. Ah, the touch of his lips upon my hand! . . . Everything seemed misty around me, but I looked up at him and smiled.

Papa stood looking at us, and rubbing his hands. There was a whistle from the other side of the drawbridge—a low, patient kind of whistle. "That's just Octave," said papa carelessly; then raising his voice: "Only a moment now, my boy!"

As he turned back to the Marquis and me, it seemed to me that I had never seen my papa look really happy and pleased and excited about anything, before. His eyes were twinkling wildly, his mouth was smiling from ear to ear. "So it's settled!" he said. "Name of a cannon! Now he will have some

employment for his millions, the poor old Papa Poizelle! Ah! Ah! In a year's time, it will look different, this old chateau, I give you my word. Electric light!—satin furniture, rococo, and gilding!"

He seized the Marquis's hand and wrung it in his own, jumping up and down with pleasure so that his hair stuck up straight from his head—dear little papa! "Ah! Ah! To-morrow it comes down, I promise you, the picket fence between our domains!—I mean across *our* domain! To-morrow I send instructions to my notary in Paris, to begin negotiations to buy the Hôtel de Saint-Yriac, in the Faubourg-Saint-Germain. It shall be new furnished from top to toe, for a wedding present to my daughter. Ah, what a wedding we shall have—what splendor, what a dowry, what settlements! Father-in-law to a marquis! Ah! Ah! I shall go crazy!"

Another whistle sounded from across the drawbridge, soft and low. "Papa," I said timidly, "who is to tell Octave?"

"Octave? Who cares for that little rabbit of a Boussard, when there is an affair with a marquis? . . . And yet, there was a certain understanding. It is awkward, I own to you. For certainly, Octave must be told!" and he frowned, half troubled.

Hazel came forward with a little smile, blushing and laughing too. "If you like, monsieur," she said, "*I* will go and tell Monsieur Boussard!"

"Mademoiselle, you are kind, to perform that unpleasant service for me. He is there, on the other side of the drawbridge. A thousand thanks, mademoiselle!"

Hazel tripped down the drawbridge; about half-way across she turned, white and slim in the flaring red light, and kissed her hand to me with a little shy smile. Then she disappeared into the

darkness, and on the other side of the drawbridge we heard the murmur of voices, vanishing down the hill.

"And it is high time for us to follow them!" said papa, as he turned and led the way toward the portcullis. As we crossed the court-yard after him, suddenly from the far corner by the gallery door something melted and moved in the darkness, and came silently toward us. "Mother Jobard!" I gasped, clinging to Guy's arm.

"Hurry, my children!" cried papa, waiting under the portcullis. The Marquis turned with a start and a frown to the dark old creature, as she stood there tall and withered and wild, with her deep eyes smiling at us in the flickering light.

"Here, my old woman!" said he, sternly, "so you are come back to ask forgiveness, for your deceit and infamous treatment of these young ladies?"

"Forgiveness!" she answered, with a half-smile, as she looked at me. "And why? Because everything is as it should be—because at last all has fallen out as it was foretold?

The Marquis stared, and started, and frowned,—"Ah, I begin to see! You mean . . . with a little help from you!"

"*Bon Dieu du bois!*" responded the old woman, "I ask no thanks! Monseigneur is happy at last; that is enough for his poor old servant, is it not?"

The Marquis shook his head and laughed in a grim sort of way. "*Sapristi!*" he said, "you hear her, Joujou? The more I think of it, the more I see that she has been playing with us like puppets, all these past months, this old woman!"

Mother Jobard grinned, a pleased, mysterious sort of smile, as she turned to me. "Here at least I am sure of forgiveness!" she said; then she slid

to her knees, and took my hand in hers. "The past is over and gone!" she said; "the future is yours. Welcome to Saint-Yriac, my little lady!"

"Come, what is keeping you?" cried papa, from the other side of the drawbridge. "We must follow your friend, Miss Walker,—and, beside that, they are waiting for us at home—your aunt and Madame Boussard and Madame Rondolé!"

Mother Jobard released my hand. "Come home, my children!" cried papa jovially, as he started down the hill, bending his little electric light through the blackness. "Come, my son-in-law — come, madame the Marquise!"

So, hand in hand, Guy and I followed papa down the hill.

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